

Henri Nouwen 'Life of the Beloved' ... some insights

I know who I am – I am the beloved child of God. Whatever happens, I am the beloved of God, even before I was born.

Love and wounds are never separate – we can live these two realities when we claim the First Love. Every other love is partial and limited.

How can we become more fully the beloved? ...

- *Taken – Blessed – Broken – Given*: like the Bread and like Jesus. These four words summarise the life of Jesus and they have to summarise your life as the beloved. All will recognise Jesus in you if you live these four words.
 - **Taken** – i.e. chosen by God (special in God's eyes). This doesn't mean that others are not chosen. God gives you eyes to see the chosenness of others.
 - **Blessed** – i.e. God is saying good things to you. We are called to claim the blessing and bless other people.
 - **Broken** – i.e. the enormous inner anguish and pain. We all have broken hearts. What do you do with this? (1) Have the courage to embrace / befriend your brokenness not deny it ("*take up your cross*", as Jesus says to us); (2) Dare to put the brokenness under the blessing (under the hands of the one who says '*you are my beloved*').
 - **Given** (to the world – I'm not there for myself but for others). He asked us to be fruitful not successful. Become food and drink for others.

Prayer is about listening to the voice of the One who calls you 'the beloved'. Discipline is important to keep some space open to listen to God...

- (1) The first discipline is **communion** – i.e. spending a little time everyday to listen to God. He can tell you who you are.
- (2) The second discipline is **community** – i.e. we have to listen together. We can form a community when we all feel that we are the beloved.
- (3) The third discipline is **ministry** – i.e. Jesus calls a community to be sent out to the world and proclaim the good news. Going out to your own family, friends... who needs you.

Some questions for reflection

- When you look back at your life journey, how do you discover that you are the beloved child of God? How did God show you his love?
- In your present circumstances, how are you being "*Taken – Blessed – Broken – Given*"?