

The Chief Apostle speaks out on marginalisation

Discrimination, marginalisation, division. Especially today it is important that we see our fellow human beings as Jesus sees them. This is what the leader of the New Apostolic Church International urged in a recent divine service in Hungary.

“That is the great danger—in society, also on the internet,” Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said on Sunday, 19 September 2021 during his sermon in Kápolnásnyék: “One always labels people and assigns them to the group they belong, thus judging them. This is not Christian!”

The individual counts, not the group

Friend and foe, good and bad, the correct way of life and the wrong one... The boundaries in Judaism at the time of Jesus were sharply defined. What was new with Christ was that He did not care about any affiliations. “Jesus Christ was interested in each person, the individual. That is why He said: ‘Judge not!’”

“Loving your neighbour first of all means: I look at him or her as an individual and not as a member of this or that group,” the Chief Apostle pointed out. “We are not to judge our neighbour because we know nothing at all about him. Neither his life nor the situation he is in allow us to deduce whether he is good or evil. There are good people who are in a very bad way, and there are very bad people who are very well off.”

The heart’s attitude counts, not the result

Something else the Lord Jesus taught was: “Don’t look at the performance, the result; it’s the motivation that counts!” This is shown by the incident of the widow

who put her two mites in the offering-box and the Pharisee, who gave only what he did not need. “Jesus wanted to show that it is the heart’s attitude that counts—and this is something we just cannot know.”

This applies above all to sinners: “Man sees the sin, but he does not see the guilt.” No human being knows how great another person’s guilt is. And no one knows how sincere the other person’s repentance is. Only God can know this: “You have no idea. So don’t judge your neighbour!”

Love counts, not marginalisation

“What does the Lord expect of us?” the Chief Apostle asked and supplied the answer: “That we love our neighbour.” The Lord Jesus loved sinners first, he said. Only once they felt His love, he said, did they convert.

“It is not our job to fix the world. It is not the job of the Church, of the ministers, your job, nor mine to convert sinners.” Above all: “The Lord does not want us to marginalise people.”

Instead: “They are to feel the love of God through us. Then they will come to God. The converting, the correction will be done by God, not by us. Our job is to simply say: ‘The Lord loves you. Come and see.’”

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