

# **SAINT MARTIN A KEY TO A FULLFILLED LIFE**

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Many know **SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS** from lantern processions:

Many children are happy, when they can go in a procession with their lanterns in the dark season of the year.

But what is this really about?

Is the feast of Saint Martin really a children's feast or is this feast also a key for a fulfilled life for adults?

The feast of St Martin is a feast, at which the children learn already very early something essential for their lives. But as many adults have not passed on the meaning of the feast themselves and thus also not lived those meanings in their lives it simply stays the children's lantern feast for most.

**It is time to draw on the treasures that are being given to us in word and tradition!**

What is therefore so special about St Martin that a special day was dedicated to him and that such a feast is being celebrated?

**If we look at the story of Saint Martin (born A.D. 316) we receive a key for the question of the purpose of our life.**

Christianity is a system of discipleship, because living examples of people, who have been through something, are much more vivid and convincing than a grey theory that has never been applied to life.

Sometimes I cannot understand, what people say, as that, what they are, speaks louder to me than that, what they say to me.

That, what saints say to me, is that what they are and the theories of saints stem from practical experience and are therefore invaluable treasures for us.

The Holy Apostle Paul says to us:

1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

1 Cor 11,1-2

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

1 Cor 4,16

Saints are role models, who show us, how one can focus one's life on God and how one can master special situations in life.

It is about finding our ultimate own identity.

And the one, who gives us this identity and the force of life, is God.

How it works we learn and experience through the saints.



Let us now have a look at the example of Holy Martin, how one can break the chains of the old life, and how to overcome all resistance and barriers and how with the new strength one finally becomes the one, we always wanted to be.

What you experience here will have an effect on all areas of your life. You shall see, how you lead a totally different and new life with a yet unknown strength.

## **St. Martin is a role model for a fulfilled life.**

### **1) Initial situation in worldly life**

Martin was a Roman soldier, who led a group of soldiers as a commanding officer. His job was therefore the war. Something that did not really fulfill him and that was connected with a lot of suffering. His name originates from the Roman god of war Mars.

- Many people are in life situations, in which they are not happy.

### **2) Seeking**

Because he was not happy with his life he became active and was looking for alternatives. He therefore visited Christian groups in his spare time and so heard the good news of Jesus.

- Many people ask themselves, how they should lead their lives; what is the purpose of life. Many people have heard of Jesus and of His vision of loving-kindness towards one's neighbour.

- Get to know the will of God. (Read the bible / visit a church)

### 3) The decision

Martin had now heard God's vision of life in general.

He was still not a baptized Christian and he did not know yet his special calling.

He did not wait until God told him the exact plan for his life in details but he made a decision to lead his life ACCORDINGLY TO GOD'S WILL and TO LIVE.

That means that instantly his life changed, even when the circumstances stayed at first the same.

There is a difference, whether one knows things (I know, I heard that already before) or whether one does things.

The decision is the first step into action.

- Make your decision and change your attitude.

### 4) The action

Martin's decision led to a changed ACTION.

He was riding with a group of soldiers. It was winter and they passed by freezing beggar.

He took his coat and cut it with his sword. One half he kept, the other he gave to the beggar, so that he did not have to be cold anymore.

His action sealed his decision to live by God's will.

- Let your decision change your action (even against resistance and obstacles in society).

Love your general calling. The calling that everybody has. Loving-kindness and to spread the good news. To help, to heal, to support etc.

(God gives you your personal calling, when the timing is right, f.ex. the life after the general calling, so, do not wait for it unless you start to act.

- that is a very commonly spread error: 'I need to know first, what God plans for me'. It is generally already said in the bible!).

Faith without deeds is dead. (James 2,14-26)



## **5) The Environment**

The most difficult part in this situation was for sure for Martin the response of his comrades.

They could not understand, made fun of Martin or mocked him or declared him for mad. His halved coat brought him permanent mocking.

This response is typical, when one changes one's life, and one changes the existing contacts and connections with the world.

One becomes seemingly breaking away from old patterns and appears to be different. That leads at first to resistance as the environment has already integrated you and made plans with you.

The environment does not want any changes as it creates uncertainty for them.

Typical are comments like:

'You can't do that. That is other people's job. You cannot share with a total stranger, what you have. You don't know that person. It is probably his own fault. You cannot help everybody. Then there is nothing left for you' etc.

- If you get these responses, then you know that your changes are also visible to others, and you are truly changing.

## **6) The dream**

In the night Martin had a dream, in which Jesus appeared to him. He had his half coat in his hand and said to him:

40 The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Mt 25, 40

After this his whole personality changed.

- When we start to live God's commandments and our general calling, then we give God the chance to change us.

## **7) A new person**

Martin had become a new man through Jesus. He was baptized and became a Christian.

His personality was changed by God.



## **8) To adapt our environment**

As he became a new man he was no longer able to serve in the war. He was invited by the emperor to receive a bonus payment as a recognition. But he refused the bonus.

He went to the emperor (Emperor Julian) and said to him that he was now somebody else and therefore could no longer lead a war.

That is a brave step.

The emperor could have forced him or have him imprisoned. Or from what should he live? After all, the military service was also his way of making a living.

At first the emperor doubted his motives and accused him of fear from the Germans.

- After we have adapted our deeds accordingly to our outlook against all the resistance in our environment, which led to a change in our personality (through God), it is now important to adapt our position in society to our personality.

And, of course, there are again obstacles and resistance that need to be overcome. Also to resist titles and temptations. We also can expect attacks regarding our motives.

## **9) The Vision**

God gave Martin a vision. Martin saw, how he himself went with a raised cross unarmed over a battlefield and thus ended the war against the Germans. That he told the emperor. Very brave.

The emperor did not want to know about it and was even angry about it. Then he threw him into prison and wanted to send him the next day before the battle over the field to the enemies (as a punishment because he anticipated that the enemy would kill Martin).

- When you have changed your position and dependencies in the world, then God gives you a calling or a command. It takes total SURRENDER of your will to admit to this publicly and to act accordingly to the vision or to carry out the command. Often that seemingly goes together with disadvantages in society.

## **10) Spiritual battle**

But before it came to Martin being sent to the enemy lines of the Germans a messenger came from the Germans. He said that their field marshal had a dream, in which a single man would go with a raised cross over the battlefield and all Germans fell. And because the dreams of the field marshal always came true, the Germans asked to be allowed to surrender and the right to retreat without weapons. With that the war was ended.

- When one stays faithful to one's vision and to one's calling, God fights with and for us. Sometimes it is even the case that one does not even have to carry out the deed as it is about the spiritual aspect.

## **11) The personal calling and gifts**

After that Martin went on his mission, founded a monastery and was consecrated as Bishop of Tours on 4 th July 372.

He had a few gifts of the Holy Spirit and healed the sick, held inspiring sermons and stood successfully up against heretical teachings.

- When one allows to be guided by the visions and commands of the Holy Spirit one is ready to receive in addition to the general calling also one's personal vocation from God. The VOCATION is the fulfilling task, for that we have been created. The PURPOSE of one's LIFE. To be able to live this vocation one receives spiritual gifts (skills) of the Holy Spirit, who works through us to serve man.

**Go on this path. It is the path of your life, it leads you to your vocation.**

**God helps us to go on this path.**

**Because God is the Light that we must follow to find our way.**

**„Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.“**

**Psalm 119,105**

That symbolizes the Martin's lantern at the procession. It shows us the light in the darkness. Just like God's word does it also.

At the same time the procession is a symbol for the general calling and the mission. To go together into the world and to be a shining beacon.

„But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, ....“

1 John 1,7

„14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.“

Matthew 5,14-16

**Be therefore the Light of the World!**

**Go and let the life of your neighbours shine through the good news of the gospel and through good deeds!**

**Christianity is built on following. The apostles followed Jesus and the next generation followed them and so forth. And, of course, we all follow Jesus and an important method is: We follow role models (saints) and become thus role models for others.**

I pray for you and bless you!

May God show you your personal way and lead you to your vocation.  
May God give you courage and strength to go this path even against all odds.  
May God fill you with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and fill you with joy, so that you become a light for others, whilst you follow the light on your path.

Amen

Now I invite you to learn more about „THE WAY TO GOD“.

On our homepage you will find a brochure with 12 steps.



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