

4. December 2019

“The eyes of faith”

Isa 25, 6-10a

On this mountain, for all peoples, Yahweh Sabaoth is preparing a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, of succulent food, of well-strained wines. On this mountain, he has destroyed the veil which used to veil all peoples, the pall enveloping all nations; he has destroyed death for ever. Lord Yahweh has wiped away the tears from every cheek; he has taken his people's shame away everywhere on earth, for Yahweh has spoken. And on that day, it will be said, 'Look, this is our God, in him we put our hope that he should save us, this is Yahweh, we put our hope in him. Let us exult and rejoice since he has saved us.' For Yahweh's hand will rest on this mountain, and Moab will be trodden under his feet as straw is trodden into the dung-heap.

The Lord, with His coming and all the acts of salvation, has taken away the shell that veils all nations, and the blanket that covers all nations. The light of the gospel has penetrated to the ends of the earth and the Holy Spirit has led many to the knowledge of the truth. Access to God is in principle open to people. Everyone can come to Jesus and through him to the Father. So God fulfilled the promise in his Son; or we could say, the hour of grace is still present. To everyone is offered the way of salvation, the shell is taken away! The feast is prepared, the table of the Lord richly set!

The promise has not yet been totally fulfilled, there is still something to hope for and live on. How and in what ways God will completely fulfil his own promises, we are rarely concretely aware of, and some will only be known when it happens. But we can keep in faith that it will happen and thus participate in the fulfilment of the promises! So it is not just a passive wait, but a cooperation in the work of the Lord, so that the Holy Spirit may lead all peoples to faith, and thus man also becomes aware of the reality of Christ's resurrection, who overcame the death.

Such an attitude of faith is important for our path of following Christ, especially when we recognize the sinfulness and imperfection in the lives of the peoples and in our own lives. The words and promises of the Lord are stronger than all the forces of destruction. Sometimes such words, as they come to us in today's reading, may appear very far from reality in the face of the most difficult living conditions

and negative assessments of the situation in the world and church. But here is our faith in demand, which relies on the word of the Lord even in the dark and sticks to it.

This adherence to the word of the Lord is also necessary in the inner processes of the transformation of man. In Christian mystic we know the concepts of the "Night of the Senses" and also the "Night of the Spirit." There are passages on the way of following Christ in which at the "Night of the Senses" sensual experience of God are completely in darkness, we do not experience the Lord on the emotional level, so we do not feel his love. The correct answer God intended is that we believe in his love because he promised it to us, and that is, in pure faith.

So it is with the situation in our holy church. When one has eyes to see, one can see her weakened condition on many levels. To ignore this and to justify with natural optimism and blindness everything that happens - including errors and idolatry, would not penetrate the situation with the faith. Nor if you let yourself be depressed in hopelessness facing the atrocities.

Faith teaches us that the gates of hell will not overwhelm the church (*cf. Mt 16,18*). We hold fast to that. From this word of the Lord comes a true hope. This does not mean that evil cannot enter the church, but that it cannot destroy the church. Faith also teaches us that the Lord will use everything for the sake of his believers, and that after suffering and crucifixion the resurrection will come.

With regard to the pains before the second coming of the Lord, Jesus also gives us the decisive clue. "*When you see all that, lift up your heads, for salvation is at hand.*" (*Lk 21,28*)

Thus, today's text of Isaiah will invite us to set our hope for God and His Word, and to see how God's promises are fulfilled. Our innermost alignment is thus touched and formed by the light of God, and we see with the eyes of faith.