

07. December 2019

“A joy for the Angels”

St. Ambrose

*Eph 3, 8-12*

*I, who am less than the least of all God's holy people, have been entrusted with this special grace, of proclaiming to the gentiles the unfathomable treasure of Christ and of throwing light on the inner workings of the mystery kept hidden through all the ages in God, the Creator of everything. The purpose of this was, that now, through the Church, the principalities and ruling forces should learn how many-sided God's wisdom is, according to the plan which he had formed from all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him we are bold enough to approach God in complete confidence, through our faith in him; so, I beg you, do not let the hardships I go through on your account make you waver; they are your glory.*

In the words of the apostle, even the principalities and ruling forces should learn how many-sided God's wisdom is. This means that the proclamation of the Gospel to all Gentiles, and thus the unfolding of God's plan with humanity, unfolds through the Church before heaven.

This is an amazing dimension, which we certainly rarely include in our thinking, because we primarily direct our view on the Church militant. Our ministry here on earth in the church - when we participate in the conscious proclamation of the gospel in the manner entrusted to us - is attentively perceived in heaven. So it does not seem to be the case that among the "princes and powers" of the celestial realm there is a kind of omniscience that knows exactly what will happen, as it is only with God himself.

This opens up another motivation for the proclamation of the gospel. Certainly we know about the cooperation with the heavenly church and also the suffering church, which are dependent on our prayers and sacrifices, so that they get into the whole view of God. We know about the constant help of the saints and angels, who sustain, empower, comfort, inflame, and correct us, if we invite them. But obviously there is a service we can do for them.

They love God and since they love Him, the glory of God is their joy. So we can increase their joy, even more if we are as close as possible to God's plan with us.

Conversely, we may also assume that we deprive them of joy and, in a certain sense, sadden them if we do not properly occupy our God-given place and so do not develop all possible fertility.

Is it not a wonderful perspective to see the heavenly church involved as well?

Without, however, taking ourselves in the foreground, we feel the responsibility to respond to the call we have received.

First of all, before God, for what honour and distinction it is, not only to receive salvation from the Lord, but to be called - as weak people - to participate in his work of salvation. How will it be for our Father if we try to do his will and leave our earthly interests behind! Let us remember the Lord, when he looked sadly at the rich man, who led a good life according to the commandments of God, but did not accept the greater invitation of God (*cf. Mt 19,16-22*).

Let us now add the joy of the angels, and certainly the joy of all those who are already with the Lord. If there is joy in heaven over a sinner who turns back (*cf. Lk 15,10*), and therefore finds his way home, we can be sure that every day that we truly spend in following Christ and serve the Kingdom of God increases the joy in heaven, because then the wisdom of God becomes even more known to the principalities and ruling forces. I have already mentioned the suffering church. Our ministry is also a great joy to them, a consolation, and, moreover, a great help to reach the desired goal of union with God.

I believe we should take a close look at this perspective of the beloved Apostle of the Gentiles and let it penetrate our hearts. Especially in our time when the proclamation of the Lord's message in our church is weakening more and more and the attempt of inculturation often - without true discernment of the spirits - produces the strangest (poisoned) flowers! At a time when one is officially no longer really pleased with a Jew who finds his way to the church or a Muslim who converts to the Lord, let us be more oriented towards the heavenly church. It will strengthen us and help us not to be confused in our endeavours so that the eternal plan of God, which He has carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord, will become visible in all its fullness.

Let's take a look at the Virgin Mary. What joy is in heaven, that she has spoken her Yes fully to God's plan of salvation. Through her, we see how the human being is honoured to participate in the work of salvation.

And let us remember the second coming of the Lord which is near. May the Spirit of God awaken us all, so that we may do our service in the vineyard of the Lord and give up all sleepiness! The heaven is waiting for that!