

5. January 2020

“And the light shineth in darkness”

Jn 1, 1–5.9–14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten son of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

These holy words are always read at the end of the celebration in the Tridentine Rite, with a knee-bend at the words: "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*".

We should always remember the marvelousness of the Lord's coming, how God's love for us has been inclined. We can never praise enough this mystery that the angels proclaim, and we will only understand it more in eternity. But we can already now adore the will of God and thank him for this love, even if - as St. Paul says - we only look through a dark mirror. (*cf. 1 Cor 13,12*).

With this message, however, comes the pain that the light of God, which enlightens every person, is not received by men, and that the Son of God must suffer rejection and persecution. This pain can become an additional impulse for us to announce to people how they can also receive the light that is here for all. We know it: through a true encounter with the Son of God who seeks what is lost (*cf. Lk 19,10*) and through a true conversion!

The text speaks of the fact that the children of God are born of God. In the sacramental realm, this certainly refers to Holy Baptism, which promises us the saving grace of Christ and therefore the Lord's mission of baptism exists (*cf. Mt*

28,19). This also includes to internalize the grace of baptism and thus becoming capable of living as children of God.

To live as born of God means to live in the Holy Spirit, because He is poured out into our hearts (*cf. Rom 5,5*) and reminds us of what Jesus said and did (*cf. Jn 14,26*). This God-given life needs constant spiritual nourishment so that it is not only kept alive, but that it develops and gives us a vision and a way of acting that is enlightened by the true light - Jesus Christ.

Even if people do not yet know the Lord, they can be touched by this light. All the good and true knowledge that can be discovered in them - especially in some religions - comes from God and is aimed at meeting the fullness of the light.

In an interview these days Cardinal Müller expresses this in this way:

"From the Christian point of view we know that God leads people to their salvation and has done many good deeds for them (Acts 14:17) and in it has declared his "eternal power and divinity" (Rom 1:20). Even though they were still ignorant before Christ and yet sought Him according to God's will (Acts 17:27), wherever they sought and worshipped a higher power, they worshipped the true God in an unknown way, implicitly and intentionally (Acts 17:23).

Whatever is found in the religions of mankind and the search for truth and salvation in the true, good and beautiful, originates from the universal salvific will of God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God realizes this historically through the only mediator between the one God and all human beings: the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:4f)."

If we want to give people the witness of the true light that already shines in their search for God, then - as the Church has always understood - we must help to separate light and darkness in their search for God. The recognition of good knowledge implies the purification of errors, just as the Holy Spirit spreads his light in our souls, teaching us to follow the true light and in this way to detach ourselves from sins, errors and wrong attitudes. If this does not happen then no purification process takes place in the soul and the light given by God does not penetrate our life and remains as if under a big blanket.

This can perhaps be compared to the knowledge of the Jewish faithful who have received much of God's revelation and all that they realize in His Spirit is certainly in accordance with the will of God, but have not yet reached the fullness of light:

the knowledge of the glory of the only begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Consciously withholding the proclamation of the Son from them would mean that we would be trying to extinguish God's burning desire that His first-chosen people should reach the fullness of light and recognize His Messiah.

When we look at Muslims, we see the denial of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the divine sonship of Christ and the redemption of mankind through Him from sin. God cannot want these grave errors to persist and thus prevent people from reaching the true light.

May the Lord help us to be worthy bearers of His light in this year that has begun and to apply the "power of the children of God" over the heart of our Father in such a way that we ask for many true conversions to God and that those who have already been touched by the light of God may reach the fullness of light.