

21. January 2021

“The Lamb will defeat them”

1 Cor 1:26-31

Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families. No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by human standards are common and contemptible - indeed those who count for nothing - to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something, so that no human being might feel boastful before God. It is by him that you exist in Christ Jesus, who for us was made wisdom from God, and saving justice and holiness and redemption. As scripture says: If anyone wants to boast, let him boast of the Lord.

Today, the Church's gaze is directed to St. Agnes, virgin and martyr, to whom this text applies wonderfully.

Harpa Dei has written a radio play which will tell the story of this saint from tomorrow.

St. Agnes came from a noble Roman family. As was customary at the time, she was to be married off at the age of twelve. The son of the city prefect of Rome asked for her hand in marriage. Since Agnes rejected him on grounds of faith, for she had already promised herself to Christ, the whole drama unfolded.

We have already broadcast a radio play this month about St Jehanne d' Arc and reflected on her unusual vocation. As a young girl she was prepared to fulfil a special mission from God, even if it meant martyrdom for her in the end.

In St Agnes we again meet a virgin who would prefer nothing to the love of Christ and was prepared to suffer death for it.

Two of the Lamb's flock!

The one who went to war to save her fatherland from the hands of the enemy. The other who fearlessly confronted the power of Rome and confessed Jesus as her

Lord. Both testify that the love of Christ is stronger than death and that God chose the weak in the world to put to shame the strong.

It was the Lamb of God who was victorious in them in the great battle that is given to all who follow Jesus. It is the great war of the powers of darkness against the powers of light described in chapter 17 of Revelation (v. 14), the rebellion against the reign of Christ, as already heard in Psalm 2: *“Kings of the earth take up position, princes plot together against Yahweh and his anointed”* (Ps 2:2).

But this war is not open-ended, for those who rise up against the Lamb will be defeated: *“They will go to war against the Lamb; but because the Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings, he will defeat them, he and his followers, the called, the chosen, the trustworthy.”* (Rev 17:14)

In the two virgins, the Lord defeats the powers of sedition that stood against them.

Jeanne remained faithful to her vocation even unto death and did not allow the abuse of temporal and ecclesiastical power to dissuade her from her mission. The spirit of strength worked in her. The Lord is invincible in her.

St. Agnes remains faithful to her spousal love for Christ. She confesses: *“He has put a ring on my finger and placed a noble jewel around my neck; he has clothed me with a mantle interwoven with gold and adorned me with beautiful clasps. He hath put a sign upon my face, that henceforth I love none but him alone.”*

In her, too, the spirit of strength is at work and death cannot frighten her. In her too the Lord is invincible!

With St. Joan of Arc and St. Agnes we get to know two wonderful virgins from the host of the Lamb, in whom the victory of the Lamb becomes visible. They are not only models for us! In these apocalyptic times, they call us to take our place in the Lamb's host and to follow him fearlessly wherever he leads us (*cf. Rev 14:4*). They testify to us that through the invincible presence of the Lord in us, we too can become capable of giving our lives to the Lord as wholeheartedly as they did. What is necessary is that the Lord's love ignites us and that we respond to it, because everything that Jeanne and Agnes did was out of love for Jesus.

May the radio play bring us closer to St. Agnes in her radiant purity and may we gain with her a faithful friend from among the Lamb's flock. May St. Agnes come with her love into our hearts as St. Joan of Arc did, so that we may know the two

radiant virgins at our side in the increase of anti-Christian darkness and resist the turmoil of the powers of darkness in its strength.