

5. September 2021

Here is your God

Isa 35:4-7a

'And say to the faint-hearted, 'Be strong! Do not be afraid. Here is your God, vengeance is coming, divine retribution; he is coming to save you.' Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame will leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy; for water will gush in the desert and streams in the wastelands, the parched ground will become a marsh and the thirsty land springs of water; the lairs where the jackals used to live will become plots of reed and papyrus.'

Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord addresses the discouraged.

The discouraged are people who are faithful, but who are easily frightened and too intimidated by fears and external threats. They forget to turn to the Lord or do so with too much insecurity; that is, without sufficient determination. Thus, under the influence of fears, faith seems to shake and people easily become discouraged.

Whoever observes the current situation in the world under the coronavirus crisis could easily become discouraged. There is a lot of negative news, which shows that the crisis has not been overcome and that trust is placed in people to pretend to overcome it. Sacred Scripture warns us not to put our trust in people, with these words: *"Do not put your trust in princes, in any child of Adam, who has no power to save."* (Ps 146:3). And this is precisely what we should transmit to everyone in this crisis: Seek help and refuge in God, so that you will not be discouraged in this time of confusion; but may the spirit of fortitude be the one to give you courage and strength, and the spirit of counsel teach you to do the right thing!

The key out of discouragement and despondency is found in this simple affirmation, "Here is your God!"

We must lift up our eyes and perceive the presence of God.

Today's reading points to the coming of the Messiah, who will come and save. All the wonderful promises that follow were indeed fulfilled in the life of Jesus in the sight of many, and they continue to be fulfilled today as well. If we interpret them spiritually, it will be easy to understand that Jesus opens our eyes, so that we may recognize Him and thus meet the living God; that He opens our ears, so that we may perceive the Word of

God, which clarifies and orders our thinking. Whoever receives the Spirit of God is filled with new life, and his tongue, previously mute, proclaims the praises of God. When we encounter God's love, he causes living water to pour forth in the desert within us, and then we ourselves can bear witness to this water to the people who live in the steppe, thus becoming streams of living water. In this way, the aridity of our life is transformed into fertile soil, in which God can make abundant fruit grow.

All this happens when we men and women turn our eyes to God and do not allow ourselves to be swallowed up by a lifestyle that makes us blind and sterile.

We Catholics must not only allow ourselves to be awakened from our personal discouragement, remembering the great gift that God has given us in faith; but we also have the mission to bring this gift to others, in an appropriate way. Here too, we must let ourselves be freed from all discouragement: discouragement because perhaps many people no longer want to accept the Gospel; discouragement because public opinion is increasingly hostile to Christianity; discouragement because we believe that our strength of conviction is too weak; discouragement because our efforts seem to bear little fruit....

The Lord's promises are still valid today, and we can have full confidence in Him. This is what God wants of us: that we do not let ourselves be determined by our moods, but by His Word. It will sustain us in all confusion, whatever afflicts us.