

26. October 2021

The creation is waiting for the children of God to be revealed

Rom 8:18-25

In my estimation, all that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the glory which is destined to be disclosed for us, for the whole creation is waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be revealed. It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it- with the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God. We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains. And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free. In hope, we already have salvation; in hope, not visibly present, or we should not be hoping - nobody goes on hoping for something which is already visible. But having this hope for what we cannot yet see, we are able to wait for it with persevering confidence.

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Thus speaks to us the Apostle Paul, who gave us a glimpse of the tremendous sufferings he endured for the sake of the Gospel (2 Cor 11:24-29). Most Christians will probably not experience sufferings on such a level, but this statement of his is a very significant indication for us, who are to be men of hope. The sufferings of this time, however difficult they may be, must not crush us, discourage us or rob us of hope. If this happens, it is perhaps a sign that our soul is not sufficiently vigilant and too much immersed in suffering. The Devil, for his part, can make a difficult situation of suffering look even darker. In such circumstances, it will help us to remember the Apostle's words, which will give us hope and lift our eyes: there awaits us a glory beyond compare, and then we will be able to say, "Lord, how small were those sufferings which you endured with us, compared with the glory which we can now experience." Saying this now, in faith and in hope, will help us not to despair in the face of suffering, to lift up our eyes to God and to "wait with patience".

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What does this mean?

We men are delivered from the bondage and lostness of sin through our Lord. This process includes the whole of Creation, which was submitted to us so that we might rule over it (cf. Gen 1:28). The more the mystery of Redemption permeates us, the more careful

we will also be in our dealings with the Creation entrusted to us. We can learn this attitude from the Lord Himself, since we are His Creation, which He has raised to His children. How well the Lord treats us! And it is precisely this way of treating us that we must imitate, in the first instance in relation to other people, but also to the irrational Creation, whose various elements St. Francis calls his brothers in his famous "Canticle of the Creatures".

But here it is important to make a clear distinction: Man is to help Creation to reach its highest destiny according to God's plan, and he is to treat it as the Lord has ordained. In pagan cults, on the other hand, man deifies Creation, for lack of a true knowledge of God. So - with all the sensitivity we may have for the dignity of Creation from the hands of God - there can be no question of paying special homage to Creation or to certain symbols that represent it. This would be idolatry, which offends both God's and man's dignity.

In our Catholic Church, care must be taken not to make room for pagan elements - under the concept of "inculturation" - whether adopted from indigenous peoples, other religions or esoteric conceptions. These would obscure the liturgy and the teaching of our Church! The painful memory of the unworthy spectacle of the Pachamama worship that took place two years ago in the Vatican Gardens and in St. Peter's Basilica is still vivid.

It is commendable that efforts are being made to treat creation better and to be more sensitive to it. Sensible measures concerning the environment and available resources are also welcome and often necessary. But all this must not lead to an ideological and quasi-religious attitude, which could degenerate into a substitute for religion.

Let us put our hope in the Lord in everything, and then we will have found the direction in which we have to move!