

19. March 2022

Solemnity of St Joseph
“Faith is reputed to us as righteousness”

Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22

For the promise to Abraham and his descendants that he should inherit the world was not through the Law, but through the uprightness of faith. That is why the promise is to faith, so that it comes as a free gift and is secure for all the descendants, not only those who rely on the Law but all those others who rely on the faith of Abraham, the ancestor of us all (as scripture says: I have made you the father of many nations). Abraham is our father in the eyes of God, in whom he put his faith, and who brings the dead to life and calls into existence what does not yet exist. Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed that he was to become father of many nations in fulfilment of the promise: Just so will your descendants be. This is the faith that was reckoned to him as uprightness.

Through faith the door opens to all the peoples and all peoples can be united in this faith. This is how it is meant by God and this is why he sends his Son into this world, not only to gather the lost sheep of Israel (cf. Mt 15:24), but to lead all people home to the Father's house (cf. Jn 10:16). Actually, everything is quite simple if we accept the message of Christ and live it. Everyone becomes a brother, lives as a child of God and allows himself to be led by the Father's hand through time into eternity. It is really simple from God's point of view when we accept His gracious action towards us and respond in faith. Our paths unravel and become clear. However, we still suffer both within ourselves and in the outside world from the loss of paradise and sin with its consequences which has entered this world (cf. Gen 3:16-23).

St. Joseph was a man of faith and obedience. The way he accepted and fulfilled the will of God indicates a great loving heart. Even the hardships he initially faced because of his bride's pregnancy mark him as a righteous man (cf. Mt 1:18-19). He could not explain it, but neither did he suspect. This is a noble attitude from which we can learn a lot, for example, when we encounter circumstances that are contrary to what we usually know of a person.

When the angel commanded Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt, he got up immediately (cf. Mt 2:13-14). This immediate standing out and following God's

will is what gives a radiant light to the union of faith and obedience. It shines like the obedience of the holy angels who know no hesitation in fulfilling the Lord's most powerful desire. They are already on their way - to describe it in human terms - even before the Lord has commanded everything. This is not done out of rashness, but out of holy zeal. It is their joy to fulfil the will of God.

We humans are still hindered by our earthly inertia, our attachment to this world, to our own desires, ideas and dreams. They bind us so that they restrict the mobility of acting out of faith.

God knows all these circumstances and with great patience he leads us through this time.

But what is needed for a fruitful journey with us is faith. This becomes our righteousness before God.

If we accept, affirm and internalise all that God has done and is doing for us, if we believe his promises and above all accept the faith in his Son and follow him, then we are true descendants of Abraham and live in the promise of God that he already made in Abraham for all nations (cf. Gen 28:14).

With such a view, we understand how much at home we are in the providential goodness of God when we embrace faith. Not only do we enter the Church of which our Lord is the head (cf. Col 1:18), but the plan of God, which he already carried in his heart, is fulfilled in our lives.

Let us pause for a moment, for this is far beyond our limited human thinking. You and I, we and many other people are called to consciously participate in God's plan for humanity. Faith makes it possible, opens the door "to times long past" and establishes the connection with our forefathers. It is not just a memory or a beautiful narrative! No, it is living reality in God into which we enter in faith. He himself shares himself with us and draws us to his heart. And there in his heart is room for all the people of the world, if only they knew it!