

2. July 2022

The wonderful promises of God

Am 9:11-15

On that Day, I shall rebuild the tottering hut of David, make good the gaps in it, restore its ruins and rebuild it as it was in the days of old, for them to be master of what is left of Edom and of all the nations once called mine -Yahweh declares, and he will perform it. The days are coming- declares Yahweh- when the ploughman will tread on the heels of the reaper, and the treader of grapes on the heels of the sower of seed, and the mountains will run with new wine and the hills all flow with it. I shall restore the fortunes of my people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, they will plant vineyards and drink their wine, they will lay out gardens and eat their produce. And I shall plant them in their own soil and they will never be uprooted again from the country which I have given them, declares Yahweh, your God.

God's promises give hope to the faithful and reveal to us the Lord's true intentions, which are a clear expression of his goodness and fatherly love. We may find it more difficult to recognise this love when it is shown from the side of admonition and formation, or when it announces punishment through the prophets. But it is always the same love of God, which unfortunately all too often encounters the sin and misfortune in which man lives, so that it is forced to take the necessary measures.

In today's text, however, God's joy resounds, when He is able to fill His children with good things and make them experience the fullness of life, so that their hearts rejoice. But they are still promises and their fulfilment is often still pending, especially the one that assures us that in eternity we will live together with God in unceasing joy.

Some political ideologies take advantage of these expressions, and believe they can promise people a paradise on earth. And how many are blinded by such promises! In reality, we will not be able to experience a paradise in this earthly life, for man's sin, with all its consequences, will only be fully overcome when we are with God.

Yet it is these promises that keep us going, not only because they enable us to clearly recognise God's love, but also because they remind us that the darkness will have to give way.

This certainty also counts for everyday life! Not infrequently thick clouds hang over our lives, and we are unable to recognise the next step to take. Sometimes it seems as if things are not moving forward or even seem to be getting worse.

But God's promises are not only a comfort and an expression of his benevolence, they are also given to us as an object of faith so that we can hold on to them. If God has said it, it will come to pass: We can wait for it day by day! We can be sure that after darkness, light will come; after night, day; after sorrow, joy!

Moreover, we must bear in mind that the coming of better times implies our cooperation, for peace and war are not simply historical developments or destinies that occur without us, men, having anything to do with them. In the case of war and all that is negative, it is the product of sin; in the case of peace and all that is good, it is the fruit of true relationship with God.

"Seek peace and pursue it" - the psalm tells us (Ps 34:14). Therefore, day by day we are called to work together to lay the foundations for a better time. These promises that the prophet Amos pronounces for the people of Israel, after he had warned so much about the terrible consequences of turning away from God, must lift us up and encourage us. Good times will come; evil will never triumph, even if it presents itself as omnipotent and leaves behind it the traces of desolation. But the ruined hut will be raised up, its breaches repaired, its ruins restored.

"The mountains will run with new wine..."

By our daily effort to live in God's Will, we are preparing the way for what is to come. Finally, we can also interpret today's text in relation to our interior life: The Lord restores our soul, heals it and makes it strong, so that it can subdue *"what is left of Edom and of all the nations"*, which, in this case, would represent our inner enemies. Then our lot will change, as the psalm says (cf. Ps 126:4), and we will live in God's grace. This means that the Holy Spirit will work in us in superabundance, as in a fruitful vineyard, and we will be planted in the heart of God, and no one will ever be able to uproot us from there.