



3. July 2022

Praise to the Holy Cross

Gal 6:14-18

But as for me, it is out of the question that I should boast at all, except of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. It is not being circumcised or uncircumcised that matters; but what matters is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this as their rule and to the Israel of God. After this, let no one trouble me; I carry branded on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, my brothers. Amen.

St. Paul speaks to us today of the Cross of the Lord and affirms that he does not want to glory except in it. He also speaks of the "new creation" that is engendered in the Cross...

And from the Redemption brought to us by the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the text of today's first reading, taken from the Prophet Isaiah, takes on its deepest meaning: *"Rejoice with Jerusalem, be glad for her, all you who love her! Rejoice, rejoice with her, all you who mourned her! So that you may be suckled and satisfied from her consoling breast, so that you may drink deep with delight from her generous nipple."* (Isa 66:10-11)

Our God reigns from the throne of the Cross; from the Cross flows peace for the nations, if they accept this gift that the Lord offers them: *"For Yahweh says this: Look, I am going to send peace flowing over her like a river, and like a stream in spite the glory of the nations."* (Isa 66:12)

The Cross is the tree of life which the book of Revelation describes in these terms: *"Down the middle of the city street, on either bank of the river were the trees of life, which bear twelve crops of fruit in a year, one in each month, and the leaves of which are the cure for the nations."* (Rev 22:2)

From the Cross come the consolations of the Holy Spirit, because He shows us the forgiveness of sins and the new life that flows for us from this tree of life. The grace that the Lord gave us in it is like a river, a torrent that wants to wash away and carry away

everything impure, evil, diabolical... In this sense, the Revelation of St. John tells us further on: *"Blessed are those who will have washed their robes clean, so that they will have the right to feed on the tree of life and can come through the gates into the city. Others must stay outside: dogs, fortune-tellers, and the sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and everyone of false speech and false life."* (Rev 22:14-15)

In meditating on the Passion and Death of Christ, it is important that - without minimising the evil of the events as such - we contemplate deeply the love of God that is revealed in the event of the Cross. It is the great work of love of the Father, who sends his Son for the salvation of the world, so that the sin that separates us from God may be overcome by God himself. This is the motivation of God, who in the Cross wants to show us his infinite love and to call people into his Kingdom.

Only from this perspective is the mystery of the cross revealed to us more profoundly. The way of the cross was necessary to liberate man. Thus, we can again and again bring all our sins, limitations, weaknesses and faults to the foot of the Cross, so that they may be touched by the love of Christ, which in it is manifested to us in a special way.

If we are sincerely converted, we can - like the "good thief" - enter Paradise today (cf. Lk 23:43) and taste the water of life: *"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' Let everyone who listens answer, 'Come!' Then let all who are thirsty come: all who want it may have the water of life, and have it free."* (Rev 22:17)

Indeed, where the water of life flows towards us, where God's grace purifies us in the blood of his Son and gives us new life, Paradise begins there, because we return to the full communion with God that we lost when we fell into sin and were expelled from Paradise.

How could the same Lord who gave his life for us reject us once we have accepted his love and tried to remain in his grace?

Then our heart can only rejoice in God's works of love and regain its true life force. This is how Isaiah's prophecy from today's reading comes to fulfilment: *"When you see him, your heart will rejoice, and your bones will flourish like a meadow"* (Isa 66:14).

May the Lord grant new vitality to our holy Church; may all illusions and merely human works in Her fade away; may the influence of darkness be rejected, so that the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, may proclaim to the world Her marvellous witness, without human respects and without trimmings.