

8. September 2022

Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary  
The holy obedience of Mary

Micah 5:1-4a

*Thus says the Lord: "But you (Bethlehem) Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, from you will come for me a future ruler of Israel whose origins go back to the distant past, to the days of old. Hence Yahweh will abandon them only until she who is in labour gives birth, and then those who survive of his race will be reunited to the Israelites. He will take his stand and he will shepherd them with the power of Yahweh, with the majesty of the name of his God, and they will be secure, for his greatness will extend henceforth to the most distant parts of the country. He himself will be peace! Should the Assyrian invade our country, should he set foot in our land, we shall raise seven shepherds against him, eight leaders of men".*

A Marian feast is always a reason to reflect on the extraordinary election of Our Lady. Never will the praise of the Mother of God have resounded loud enough, never will we trust her enough, never will we praise her virtues too highly...

Among Mary's many virtues, her holy obedience stands out in particular. This goes beyond the obedience due to God as our Creator and Father, which is already of great value in itself. But Mary's holy obedience is an expression of her loving trust, it springs from her conviction of God's goodness and breathes her attitude of inner openness towards God, penetrating deeply into the Heart of the Lord and inviting Him, in turn, to pour Himself into her virginal heart.

Let us try to "put ourselves in God's shoes", to understand from God's perspective what it means for a heart to give itself completely to Him, without letting itself be limited by doubts, fears or other obstacles. In such a heart, the Holy Spirit no longer has to undertake the most basic purifications, but can enter as the loving bridegroom into the chamber of his bride, who has given herself to Him. In this heart He is welcome, and He does not first have to remove all that hinders His coming. Thus He can bestow all His love on her.

What a joy it must have been for God to find in the Virgin Mary such a Bride! He Himself had prepared her for this encounter, preserving her from the stain of original sin, so that her soul resembled that of Eve, when she still lived in the state of innocence in Paradise. However, while Eve gave in to the seductions of the Evil One and transgressed God's commandment, the "new Eve" lovingly accepted God's plan, opened her soul completely to the divine Will and followed it in holy obedience.

Although we are not exempt from original sin, God calls us, like the Virgin Mary, to give ourselves totally to His work of love. The spousal dimension and receptivity to God's saving will can also awaken in our souls. Our soul can also become the bride of the Holy Spirit, so that He can come to it at any time to spread His light.

On this day, when we rejoice at the Birth of the Virgin Mary and thank the Lord for having chosen her and her for having so meekly accepted God's invitation, we can ask our Mother to teach our soul in this holy obedience. Indeed, in Mary we see the model of the Church and also her goal, which is to be united as a chaste Bride with the divine Bridegroom.

Perhaps in our time this language seems old-fashioned, because nowadays the sanctity of marriage, the importance of chastity and the tender relationship between man and woman are more and more unknown. When the human reflection, which should be the image of God's love so that we know and understand it, is obscured, it is all the more important that we turn to the Mother of the Lord, asking her to grant us to love God as she loves Him, to receive Him as she receives Him and to unify ourselves with Him as she is united with Him. Mary will know how to lead us to this trusting obedience and will ask the Holy Spirit to put aside all that hinders us from living in this obedience. In this way, we will be able to follow the Lord simply and confidently, and our heart will become a place of rest for God.

The Virgin Mary became the privileged place where God rested and dwelt. In her He brought forth the new creation in Christ. In her God's dialogue with man is made present, just as it must have been in Paradise: the natural listening to the Lord, the attitude of trust, the loving surrender to him and the response to his call. All this invites us to make our hearts also a privileged place of His grace, through which God can shower blessings on the whole world and also on ourselves.

NOTE: In the following link you will find three meditations that could help you to deepen your relationship with the Virgin Mary: the Beloved Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Bride of the Holy Spirit.

<https://youtu.be/CvZpPjLhXpE>

<https://youtu.be/cxRneL2fakU>

<https://youtu.be/indpvGles14>