



Balta Lelija

28. November 2022

Jerusalem

Ps 121,1-2.4-5.6-7.8-9

*I rejoiced that they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'
At last our feet
are standing at your gates, Jerusalem!*

*Jerusalem, built as a city,
in one united whole,
there the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,*

*A sign for Israel to give thanks
to the name of the Lord.
For there are set the thrones of judgement,
the thrones of the house of David.*

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,
prosperity for your homes!
Peace within your walls,
prosperity in your palaces!*

*For love of my brothers and my friends
I will say, 'Peace upon you!'
For love of the house of the Lord our God
I will pray for your well-being.*

When we hear the word "Jerusalem," even today something awakens in our hearts. This is experienced by many believers, and not a few people who go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem can see that, as the psalm says, there is "peace within your walls". Pilgrims feel spiritually at home in the City of the Lord.

Jerusalem is called the "Holy City," the "City of the Great King," the "City of God"... But Sacred Scripture speaks not only of the earthly Jerusalem, but also of the New Jerusalem, which descends from heaven as a Bride adorned for her Bridegroom (Rev 21:2).

Undoubtedly, God chose this City in a special way, and those who know and love His Son Jesus are aware of how much He Himself loved it:

"As he drew near Jerusalem and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it and said, 'If you too had only recognized on this day the way to peace! But in fact it is hidden from your eyes!'" (Lk 19:41-42).

But instead of being recognized as the One who brings true peace, Jesus has to exclaim with deep sorrow the words:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused!" (Mt 23:37).

Nevertheless, the Lord has not rejected Jerusalem, even though many punishments have befallen it... He has erected in it the sign of salvation. There, in Jerusalem, is the place of His redemptive Cross, there is the Tomb of the Risen One, there His Spirit descended upon the disciples, making them fearless witnesses. There the Lord will return at the End of Time.

Although the Temple was destroyed, just as Jesus had predicted, his promise that in three days he would rebuild it was fulfilled. *"But he was referring to the Temple of his body."*

God remains faithful to His City, even though in Her His beloved Son has been despised and crucified. He chose her, and if His City is unfaithful to Him, He remains faithful (cf. 2 Tim 2:13). Nothing can shake His love. And if this love is rejected, He responds by opening his heart even more.

That is why, to this day, we can exclaim with the psalmist:

*"I rejoiced that they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"*

Since we are the People of the New Covenant, we must pay attention to what is said in the psalm, for it is still valid for us, who, moreover, can understand the underlying reason and the answer that most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the world do not yet know.

If we want to say to Jerusalem, "Peace be with you," we must keep in mind that the Lord Himself has told us what will bring true peace to His Holy City and to the whole world: *"If only you also knew this day what brings you to peace!"*

Only Jesus - and, therefore, God Himself - brings true peace. This is the message that the Lord has entrusted to us Christians. Only when people are converted to Christ and live according to the Gospel can they attain true peace. This is what the Lord reveals to us, and His words go far beyond our human considerations for peace.

This is the message of salvation for all people, including those of other religions, including Jews and Muslims living in Jerusalem. This is the message that is always valid!

If, together with the psalmist, we exclaim to Jerusalem: *"For love of the house of the Lord our God I will pray for your well-being,"* we must know that true good and true joy consist in recognizing and following the Son of God.

If we have the grace to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and visit the places that our Lord sanctified forever, we must not forget that the Father sent His Son for the Redemption of the whole world. If we want to be trustworthy peacemakers, we must pray for the conversion of all to Jesus Christ, so that, through Him, true peace may come.