



19. August 2023

For the glory of God

Eph 3:14-19

Reading for the memorial of St. John Eudes

*For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit with might unto the inward man, That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that being rooted and founded in charity, You may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*

Over and over again, Christians are exhorted to take the specific place in our lives that God has assigned to us. One of the sources that will help us not to falter in our apostolic zeal is the Word of God.

In today's reading, St Paul asks that God "*according to the riches of his glory, strengthened by his Spirit*" the community in Ephesus. This is what we need as a prerequisite for bearing witness to Christ in this world, and particularly in these troubled times. The presence of Christ must grow, and for this it needs to be nourished and interiorised more and more. As love grows in us, so does our knowledge of Christ, for love is the motivation for all that He does. And it is not a human love; it is the divine and supernatural love that has been poured into our hearts through His Spirit (Rom 5:5). That is why an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit is the key to spiritual growth.

But how can we encounter the Holy Spirit more deeply? First of all, it is always necessary to invoke His presence. In fact, the Holy Spirit has been sent into our hearts and therefore dwells within us. He is present within us as a light that, on the one hand, helps us to discover God's Will; and, on the other hand, enables us to fulfil it. Thus, the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit can become a natural and fundamental part of our life. We begin to understand better and better how He works.

It is characteristic of the Holy Spirit to act very gently. In the Old Testament we have a beautiful passage that shows this gentleness: *"God said to Elijah: Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord: and behold the Lord passeth, and a great and strong wind before the Lord over throwing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces: the Lord is not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake: the Lord is not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire: the Lord is not in the fire, and after the fire a whistling of a gentle air. And when Elias heard it, he covered his face with his mantle"* (1 Kings 19:11-13a).

Therefore, the working of the Spirit within us is rather delicate, warning and showing; rather than ravishing us with noise and strong sensitive experiences. His influence is directed more to our spirit than to our sensitive nature. In that sense, the work of the Spirit within us is different from what He does, for example, through the charismatic gifts. In the latter, the Spirit acts on the senses and touches the human emotions, which under His influence are expressed, for example, in praise.

To perceive the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit, therefore, requires more silence and sometimes solitude, a good gift of discernment and a delicate perception to grasp how the Spirit instructs and strengthens us, and to become familiar with His way of acting.

Today's reading invites us to be filled with the fullness of God, so that *"To him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, world without end"* (Eph 3:21). We are called to live for the glorification of God, and the Holy Spirit will be our unfailing guide!