

17. October 2023

God manifests Himself in the works of Creation

Rom 1:16-25

'For I see no reason to be ashamed of the gospel; it is God's power for the salvation of everyone who has faith - Jews first, but Greeks as well- for in it is revealed the saving justice of God: a justice based on faith and addressed to faith. As it says in scripture: Anyone who is upright through faith will live. The retribution of God from heaven is being revealed against the ungodliness and injustice of human beings who in their injustice hold back the truth. For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them, since God has made it plain to them: ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind's understanding of created things. And so these people have no excuse: they knew God and yet they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but their arguments became futile and their uncomprehending minds were darkened. While they claimed to be wise, in fact they were growing so stupid that they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an imitation, for the image of a mortal human being, or of birds, or animals, or crawling things. That is why God abandoned them in their inmost cravings to filthy practices of dishonouring their own bodies-because they exchanged God's truth for a lie and have worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.'

St Paul makes a very important point today. According to his words, ignorance of God is simply not justifiable, because God has clearly revealed Himself to man through the works of creation. But human beings did not acknowledge Him in order to give Him praise and thanks. As a result, their understanding was clouded and their hearts darkened.

This perspective teaches us that people are still accountable to God even when they are burdened with errors and do not make room for Him in their lives. We may be inclined to say, "Well, this person never knew God, so he is not to blame".

While it is not for us to measure the degree of a person's guilt, it is important to recognise that the ungodliness in the world is a consequence of "people holding the truth captive in their unrighteousness". If this is true of paganism, it is even more serious in the case of apostasy, when people who have already been enlightened by the faith turn away from it.

The reading speaks of idolatry and establishes a link between idolatry and lust. Indeed, when our understanding is clouded and our heart darkened because we have turned away from God, this spiritual impurity is often reflected in the realm of the senses and dishonours the body.

This reality can be clearly seen today. Godlessness and idolatry are easily associated with ungodly lifestyles. In these times of increasing apostasy in formerly Christian nations, perverse lifestyles are presented as normal and, in extreme cases, even recommended as desirable.

Therefore, as the concrete faith in God increasingly disappears in human society, a kind of neo-paganism will be accommodated and, in its pursuit, people will fall into the errors of New Age, esotericism, magical practices, and so on. As can easily be seen, this is often linked to a disordered sexual life, so that the spiritual disorder is also reflected on the physical level, as described by the Apostle to the Gentiles.

On the contrary, when persons are converted to God, when their understanding is enlightened and the confusion of the heart begins to be dissolved by the light of God, they will make a serious effort to order their sexual life according to the commandments of the Lord.

In today's evangelisation it is also necessary to proclaim clearly that there is a Creator, because not infrequently certain movements and other secular currents tend to divinise nature. In this way, however, they will not come to know the personal and loving Creator, who is also our Father. If such a mentality were to spread even in our Church - and unfortunately there are more and more signs of it - it would not only be blindness, it would be apostasy, with all its destructive consequences.

This is not how it should be!