

4. December 2023

Predispositions for real peace

Isa 2:1-5

“The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It will happen in the final days that the mountain of Yahweh's house will rise higher than the mountains and tower above the heights. Then all the nations will stream to it, many peoples will come to it and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths.' For the Law will issue from Zion and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. Then he will judge between the nations and arbitrate between many peoples. They will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, no longer will they learn how to make war. House of Jacob, come, let us walk in Yahweh's light”.

On the one hand, we can say that this prophecy has already been fulfilled; on the other hand, we have to note that it has not yet been fully fulfilled. From the perspective of faith, we can see that it has been partially fulfilled. Indeed, we can confess that *“For the Law will issue from Zion and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem”*, for from there (where the apostles were when the Holy Spirit descended upon them), the Gospel spread throughout the whole earth. The word of Jesus has been spoken and continues to be proclaimed, so that it may reach all people. It has built up whole nations, and people have been founded on it.

Those who have accepted the message of the Gospel and have allowed themselves to be penetrated by it will prefer to use the “instruments of peace” rather than to train for war. Guided by the gentleness of the Holy Spirit, they will “lay down their arms”, so to speak. This means that they will fight against their disordered passions and, heeding the word of Jesus, will rather work for peace than be the cause of quarrels: *“Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God”* (Mt 5:9).

These are the “ways of the Lord”, for He is the “prince of peace” (cf. Isa 9:6), the one who brings true peace. This is not an apparent peace, but the peace that is first of all established with God, by living according to His will. From this comes peace with our neighbour, of which we become capable when we are filled with the Lord's spirit of peace. And in this way we also find peace with ourselves, when we live in accordance with our deepest destiny.

Probably none of us can directly influence peace among nations. But it is up to all of us to be instruments of peace and to live and act in this true peace. Such an attitude will be the foundation for peace to emerge outwardly as well. On the contrary, as long as men's hearts are not converted and remain focused on pursuing their own interests, it will be impossible to overcome discord and conflict. Therefore, we are not simply at the mercy of events in the world, but with our prayer and the way of sanctification we can contribute to God granting His peace and people welcoming it with a willing heart.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control", (Gal 5: 22,23) says Scripture.

From an intimate relationship with God, the Holy Spirit will bring forth peace as fruit, along with all the other fruits mentioned (See meditation on peace as fruit of the Holy Spirit: <https://youtu.be/gGAiC7wGXHw>).

Here we see how to become instruments of peace. It is worth making a clear distinction between true peace and the "false peace", which has no foundation in God and truth; an apparent peace, which results from making certain concessions and which easily falls apart again.

The peace that can put an end to all inner wars (except those against the devil and all temptations) is born out of an authentic following of the Lord, which brings about a transformation of our heart.

The philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand writes the following in his book "Our transformation in Christ", in the chapter entitled "Blessed are the peacemakers":

"Inward peace is the central condition for abiding by the spirit of peace in the midst of an indispensable struggle for the kingdom of God (...). True inner peace is not only important as a prerequisite for the preservation of outer peace; it is in itself a great good and is indissolubly linked to transformation in Christ".

So, at the beginning of this Advent Season, reference is made to true peace as the fruit of love. It is profitable to examine again and again whether we are growing in love in our spiritual life, for all progress is measured by this criterion. To the extent that we grow in love, true peace will also unfold, and thus we will be able to "walk in the light of the Lord", as today's reading concludes by telling us.