

6. January 2024

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
Light of the nations

Is 60: 1-6

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
Lift up your eyes round about, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far,
and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice;^[a]
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Mid'ian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.*

What a wonderful promise! And it has already begun to be fulfilled, for in every place where the Gospel is proclaimed and accepted, light begins to shine and darkness must give way.

How much the Lord can transform a person's life! He transforms a Saul into a Paul; He makes great heralds of the Gospel out of cowardly disciples. People of great wealth are touched by His light to the point of leaving everything behind to follow the gentle and

meeek Jesus; the impure become chaste...All this is the work of the Lord and this is how His light shines on the nations!

Of course, we also know the other side: so many terrible things that have happened and are still happening in history... But the promise still stands and continues to be fulfilled.

Today, as the Catholic Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany, we are reminded of the manifestation of the Lord to all nations. We also know this feast as the "Day of the Magi". These three kings represent the peoples of the earth who are touched by the light of the Lord and come to Him.

We too, listening to this meditation, can say that this light has shone in our darkness, enabling us to recognise Jesus as the Son of God. Perhaps we have already become accustomed to this affirmation. And the danger of this "habit" is that we forget the great value of the gift of faith and it loses its meaning for us.

When we see the joy and enthusiasm of those who are just discovering faith, we are reminded that knowing Jesus is not the most natural thing in the world. How many people would have liked to meet God earlier, and how many are still searching for that star!

That is why it is so important that the light given to us is not extinguished, but that it shines ever brighter. To avoid falling into this indifference, we must thank the Lord every day for the gift of faith and renew and deepen our love for Him. In addition to our religious practices, we can ask Him: "What would You like me to do today, dear Lord, what can I do that would please You in a special way?"

Such questions activate in a special way the Spirit of Piety, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, because this gift leads us not only to avoid what is not God's will, but also to seek to please Him. If we ask Him these questions sincerely, He will answer us. Perhaps we are asked only small things: perhaps it is a serious intention to work within ourselves to be able to love better; perhaps it is an invitation to take more time to be with Him; or to do this or that work of mercy.

There is so much to do for the evangelisation of the nations! There are so many people waiting to meet Jesus!

Today, in addition to the theme of the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, I would like to dedicate a few words to Saint Joan of Arc, who was born in Domrémy, France, on 6 January 1412. She is our special patron saint and her extraordinary mission continues to draw our attention. Her story is well known: she was called by God to free France from the yoke of foreign oppression... And she gave her life to fulfil this mission of the Lord.

Since the saints in heaven are certainly still attached to the mission entrusted to them on earth, Saint Joan of Arc can be a great help in defending the freedom of our faith and also that of the peoples against the invasion of anti-Christian powers. A scenario is increasingly taking shape in the world in which the reign of an Antichrist seems to be in preparation, which could be exercised globally through political power and economic resources. We must not be deceived! In such an empire, our faith would be the target of increasing attacks. Those who cling to the values and convictions of the Catholic Church today are easily marginalised. Sadly, this is happening even within the Church today. If someone wants to know more about this extraordinary story, please listen to a radio play we made about Joan of Arc:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVKE6WCNZ3g>

If we find fewer and fewer models of faith, we must not forget that the earthly Church does not represent the totality of the Church. We have the angels and the saints who are waiting to help us. They live in full union with God and through them the will of the Lord is communicated to us intact.

Certainly, Joan of Arc is ready to help people in these dark times. Like her, we must put all our trust in God and accept the daily battle that is entrusted to us, especially in these apocalyptic times. The enemies of God and the Church are not the strongest and we must not be intimidated by them.

The mandate to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to bear witness to it by our lives is still valid (cf. Mt 28:19-20). But for the light of the Gospel to spread, it is also necessary to reject the powers of darkness. The "Maid of Orleans" - as Joan of Arc is often called - is only waiting for us to ask for her help, and she will ask God for the courage and strength we need for this battle. The Lamb will triumph, as the Book of Revelation assures us: *"They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them,*

for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful” (Rev 17:14).

In this context, we would like to once again invite those who are interested in participating in the spiritual battle against the anti-Christian spirit that manifests itself in the world and in the Church, to write to us at the following address: balta-lelija@jemael.net