

28. May 2024

Serving the Lord wholly

1 Pet 1:10-16

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

If only we knew the immense grace that has been given to us through faith in Jesus Christ! We would not want to waste a single minute in serving Him with all our heart, and we would make good use of the present time, as Saint Paul insists (cf. Eph 5:16).

In today's reading, the Apostle Peter tries to make us aware of the greatness of the gift of faith. Christians know what the prophets studied and with which they served those who would come after them. But they themselves, the prophets, did not receive the fullness of revelation. It was with the descent of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Apostles that the light of the Gospel reached the nations, and in this light the prophecies and events of the past are clarified and come to their fullness. In this context, the Apostle pronounces a striking phrase: the Gospel is "*things into which angels long to look*".

This phrase must be assimilated! The angels themselves, God's messengers, ceaselessly contemplating His face, long to see the mystery of this proclamation and are amazed by the wisdom of God and adore Him.

What follows in the reading are the logical consequences of the greatness of this gift from God. Indeed, we must draw the appropriate conclusions for our lives. There is no

time to lose! Whoever has known the message of the Gospel must never return to the lethargy of ignorance, when we were carried away by our passions and this shining light had not yet dawned. When a person is enlightened by the Gospel, there is a turning point in his life. Now he must gird himself and be sober, as St Peter says. From that moment on, his whole life is subject to the demands of the Gospel, because he shares in a knowledge that even the angels themselves long to see.

What does it mean to gird oneself and be sober? It means to live in a state of maximum vigilance. Once we have realised, or at least begun to realise, the greatness of what God has given us in His Son, our whole heart must be focused on Him. The Word of the Lord must become the measure and criterion of our lives. We must have the ear of a disciple and listen attentively to what God wants of us, what He has prepared for our lives. It is no longer a matter of fulfilling our own dreams and desires, but of fulfilling His will.

We can compare it to a bride in love: Once she has recognised the one, she wants only to belong to him. She waits for him, longs to see him, thinks of him. She listens carefully to see if he comes, she listens to what he says, she notices the way he treats her....

All this also happens when we meet the Lord, when we place all our hope in His grace with sobriety. Being sober means expecting everything from Him and not from ourselves.

All this applies to anyone who wants to be a "warrior of the Lamb": he waits for the instructions of his beloved Lord and tries to be ready to follow His call at all times and in all circumstances.