

30. June 2024

God Has Done All Things Well

Wis 1:13-15,2:23-24

For God did not make Death, he takes no pleasure in destroying the living. To exist - for this he created all things; the creatures of the world have health in them, in them is no fatal poison, and Hades has no power over the world: for uprightness is immortal. For God created human beings to be immortal, he made them as an image of his own nature; Death came into the world only through the Devil's envy, as those who belong to him find to their cost.

In today's reading we hear something about the splendor of Creation; or rather, we are shown with how much love God created man and all that He has prepared for us. It is very good to be reminded of this, precisely as we are confronted with so many forms of misery in human life.

In a hymn there is a verse that says: "Thou wilt restore to us the beauty of the first day, when Thou didst create us in Thy image".

Although we may lament that we have lost paradisiacal beauty and innocence, we need not dwell on this complaint, for God, in His goodness, has brought forth an even more beautiful reality for man. For this reason, the Church sings in the Easter Proclamation that unfathomable exclamation, "O Happy Fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer!" Even more glorious than paradisiacal innocence is the state of redeemed man, who has "been clothed in Christ", as St. Paul says (cf. Gal 3:27). In Christ we have been created anew; a new creature has been born, formed in His image!

In some schools of mysticism, we are taught that, in order to grow in the interior life, we must avoid dealing with creatures. This lesson would seem to contradict today's reading, in which we are told that "*the creatures of the world have health in them*". How can we interpret this apparent contradiction?

What the teachers of the spiritual life want us to understand is that we should not become inordinately attached to the creatures, for then we will fall into spiritual

disorder. The creatures have received all their beauty from God; and what is "healthy" in them comes precisely from the presence of God. But if one does not recognize this spiritual order and contemplates only the creature in itself, one ends up falling into confusion. For example, if I am so attached to a person that she becomes more important in my life than God Himself, then she becomes an idol, even without being aware of it, because she is taking the place of God.

In this sense, it is appropriate to ask for the gift of knowledge, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Science teaches us to recognize that creatures are nothing in themselves, while God is everything. When this knowledge has settled in us, we will be free to experience the beauty and "wholesomeness" of creatures, and we will have overcome those dangers - as far as dealing with them is concerned - that can be an obstacle on the spiritual way.

A great enemy of our life is death!

Sometimes we can clearly feel the paradox of death, especially when we see how, in the prime of its youth, a life comes to an end, suddenly and unexpectedly; or, worse still, when a child has to die. But the question about the meaning of death is in itself difficult to answer, for what deeper meaning could there be when we come into the world as spiritual beings, but then, when we have reached a certain age or even prematurely, we have to die, and our existence seems to remain alive only in the memory of others?

Today's reading makes it clear that death was not part of God's original plan for man. Precisely because we are created in God's image and He is immortal, death seems even more incomprehensible, but faith gives us an answer to this essential question of all men! Death came into the world as a consequence of sin (cf. Rom 6:23), and today's text clearly mentions the devil as the one whose envy opened the gates to death. From then on, the poison of death is at work and wants to drag men to perdition.

But God had mercy on us, and redeemed us through the Death and Resurrection of Christ, which unfolds its efficacy in us when, in faith, we accept the Gospel!

The Holy Spirit, who has been sent to us by the Father and the Son, now seeks to "detoxify" us, purifying and healing us from all the poison of death that our fallen nature has absorbed: the poison of envy, lies, hypocrisy, infidelity, etc., for they all kill the soul.

God did not abandon man when he turned away from Himself; rather, He traversed with him the way of death, when His own Son became man and took upon Himself our death in order to obtain salvation for us. Now, in Christ, everything is created anew, and death becomes a transition to the glory of God. At the end of time everything will be brought into the divine order, and light and darkness will be separated once and for all.

For the wicked, on the other hand, it will be too late when they find themselves before God and have not turned from their evil ways. Let us pray intensely that men will respond to God's grace; that they will discover the meaning of their existence and not lose it or, worse still, pervert it.