

18. July 2024

The path of the righteous is straight

Is 26:7-9,12,16-19

The way of the righteous is level; thou dost make smooth the path of the righteous. In the path of thy judgments, O Lord, we wait for thee; thy memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. O Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works. O Lord, in distress they sought thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time, so were we because of thee, O Lord; we were with child, we writhed, we have as it were brought forth wind.

We have wrought no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen. Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For thy dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.

God's love for us and our love for Him should be the great theme of our lives. It is not for nothing that God gave us the first commandment, which reminds and exhorts us to enter fully into reality as He gives it to us. Only then will our life unfold in all its beauty and dignity and acquire a supernatural splendour. Then we learn to perceive more and more that our life is lived under the gaze of a loving Father, and we respond to His desire to live in intimate communion with us.

As today's reading affirms, God paves the way for the just. The "just" is the believer who lives according to God's will and strives to please Him in all things. In this way his path will be smoothed, so that he will always find a way, even when there is chaos around him. It is not, then, a way that he himself makes by his own power, but the way of the Lord becomes the way of the righteous.

It is part of God's awesome wisdom to always point out the right solution to every situation, no matter how tangled it is, and even if it is caused by human fault.

This is how one begins to live in holy simplicity. Simplicity does not mean simplifying complex situations in an unacceptable way; rather, it comes from finding in God the reason for all things, whether by His active will or by His permission. In this way, one can concentrate one's strength on God in order to give the right answer to the given situation; and one does not waste it in vain trying to find an answer by oneself, which would often get entangled in many doubts.

Certainly, the just person is not an infallible person, nor does the just way consist in rigidity and immobility, much less in the stubbornness of imposing one's own point of view as absolute. To be just towards God is to have an attitude of trust towards Him that allows us to accept even unknown ways, simply because we are convinced of His love.

This righteousness towards God, of trusting Him more and more, is most pleasing to Him, simply because it is the appropriate response to His fatherly love. This attitude and trust is reflected in these words from the reading: *"For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. O Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works"*.

When God's ways become our ways, when we walk in His paths, then our ways will be sure, come what may.