

8. September 2024

Behold your God

Is 35:4-7a

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, fear not!

Behold, your God

*will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.*

He will come and save you.”

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a hart,
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.*

*For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.*

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord speaks to the discouraged.

The discouraged are people who are faithful but easily frightened and too intimidated by fears and external threats. They forget to turn to the Lord or they do so with too much uncertainty, that is, without sufficient determination. Thus, under the influence of fear, faith seems to waver and people can easily become discouraged.

With these words, which are particularly relevant in times of crisis, the Holy Scripture warns us not to put our trust in men: *"Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help"* (Ps 146:3). We can therefore exhort all people: Seek help and refuge in God, that you may not lose heart in these troubled times; but may the Spirit of fortitude give you courage and strength, and the Spirit of counsel teach you to do what is right!

The key out of despondency and discouragement lies in this simple affirmation: "*Behold your God!*"

We must lift up our eyes and perceive the presence of God.

Today's reading points to the coming of the Messiah who will come and save us. All the wonderful promises that follow were indeed fulfilled in the life of Jesus in the sight of many, and they continue to be fulfilled today. If we interpret them spiritually, it is easy to understand that Jesus opens our eyes so that we can see Him and thus meet the living God; that He opens our ears so that we can hear the Word of God, which clarifies and orders our thinking. Whoever receives the Spirit of God is filled with new life, and his tongue, which was dumb before, begins to proclaim the praises of God. When we encounter God's love, He makes living water flow within us in the desert, and then we ourselves can bear witness to this water to the people of the desert, becoming streams of living water. In this way, the aridity of our lives is transformed into fertile soil where God can make abundant fruit grow.

All this happens when we human beings turn our eyes to God and do not allow ourselves to be swallowed up by a way of life that makes us blind and sterile.

We Catholics must not only allow ourselves to be awakened from our personal discouragement by remembering the great gift that God has given us in faith, but we also have the mission to bring this gift to others in an appropriate way. In this area too, we must rid ourselves of all discouragement: Discouragement because many people may no longer want to accept the Gospel; discouragement because public opinion is increasingly hostile to Christianity; discouragement because we believe our faith is too weak, discouragement because our efforts seem to bear little fruit...

The Lord's promises are still valid today, and we can have full confidence in Him. This is what God wants of us: not to be governed by our moods, but by His Word. It will sustain us in all the confusion, whatever is troubling us.