

5. October 2024

True joy

Lk 10:17-24

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

It is understandable that the disciples rejoiced at being able to cast out the demons, for it is certainly a work of charity to help people get rid of the plague that torments them. In several Gospel passages we can see people coming to their senses after being freed from the evil spirits that possessed them (e.g. cf. Mk 5:15).

The ministry of deliverance is also important today, because evil spirits continue to torment people in our time, just as they did in the past. It is the task of the Church to overcome the power of evil spirits in the name of Jesus. The Lord has given her the authority to do so, and every "power of the enemy" is to be overcome, as Jesus tells His disciples in today's Gospel.

Although the casting out of evil spirits in possessed persons is usually the specific task of certain priests delegated by the bishop, all Christians can weaken the forces of evil in spiritual warfare.

A very effective weapon is the Holy Rosary, that simple yet powerful prayer.

Why does the Holy Rosary have such great power against the forces of evil? For one thing, its power comes from its close connection with the Virgin Mary. Through the constant repetition of the angel's greeting to the Virgin, we recall the beginning of the Redemption that took place in Nazareth. We also honour in a special way the Mother of God, who accepted God's will and said "yes" on behalf of all humanity. In contemplating this reality again and again, God's work of salvation is realised. By meditating on the mysteries of salvation, we celebrate God's victory over the forces of evil at various stages, and with each sincere prayer His light expands.

In this wonderful prayer we find all the important elements: the profession of faith, the adoration of God, the recitation of the Our Father, the meditation on the mysteries of salvation, the honouring of Mary and the request for her intercession.

In this prayer, which is intended to increase our love for God and Our Lady, we have been given a powerful weapon against the forces of evil. We must use it! Even if this is not the primary purpose of the prayer, it is an effect that cannot be neglected, because it is necessary to weaken the devil so that the light of God can reach people.

But the disciples should rejoice for another reason: because they have found favour with God and have responded to His call. God Himself, in His infinite goodness, is the inexhaustible source of joy, which is why St Paul exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord always (cf. Phil 4:4). We can rejoice because the glory of Christ has been revealed to us, and we can see and hear what so many prophets and kings wanted to see and hear (cf. Lk 10:24).

We can join Jesus in praising the Father for revealing all this to the simple (cf. Mt 11:25). What counts in the Kingdom of God is not greatness of intellect, nor wealth, nor prestige in the world, but simplicity of heart, which accepts God's truths and lives according to them.

Often it is the simple people who respond to Our Lady's invitation to pray the Rosary, as she has asked them to do in numerous apparitions. If an army of truly prayerful people is formed, especially with the Holy Rosary, then the power that Jesus gave to His disciples will be manifested in the triumph over the enemy forces.