

21. October 2024

Saved by grace

Eph 2:1-10

Bretheren: he made you alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

By His goodness and grace, the Lord transforms our condition, and from being 'children of wrath' we become His children who respond to His love, true children of God. We are no longer brothers and sisters according to blood; we are born again 'of water and the Spirit' (cf. Jn 3:5-6). Cain and Abel were brothers according to blood (cf. Gen 4:1-10), and their dramatic story repeats itself in the course of humanity. Man can even become the murderer of his brother. The bloodshed continues to this day. The only true hope for mankind - which, as its history full of suffering shows, does not improve by itself - is God's mercy, His infinite patience, the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, which redeems those 'condemned to wrath'.

As long as humanity has not accepted the Lord as Saviour, it cannot properly assimilate God's love. While this love is directed towards all His creatures and constantly seeks to bring them back home, they remain under the dominion of that spirit which is the "prince of the power of the air", when they live in the "passions of their flesh, following the desires of body and mind".

Against this realistic description of the metaphysical situation of earthly man, the bright light of God shines: *“But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (...). For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God- not because of works, lest any man should boast”*.

These words place us in the reality of our existence. We ourselves cannot redeem ourselves; and no institution, no parties, no governments, no other religions, nor all human efforts will be able to create a better world. Everything must be permeated by God's grace and touched by Christ. This is God's will, and He offers us this encounter with Christ as a gift, opening us through Him to the superabundant richness of His grace.

It follows that there is an essential difference between continuing to live as ‘children of wrath’ under the sway of the spirit of evil, or allowing God's grace to prevail in us, so that the Lord can exercise His reign of love in the life of each individual. But, lest anyone should boast, the Apostle adds that it is a free gift, a gift, which we have not obtained on the basis of our works. Therefore, if we have the true faith, far be it from us to be proud! Moreover, we must always bear in mind that, even if we are ‘children of light’ (cf. Eph 5:8), we can show ourselves unworthy of our vocation and turn away from God.

But, on the other hand, it would be false humility to fail to testify that only through Christ can true peace come. It would also be false humility to place the Christian faith on the same level as other religions, thus losing sight of the true salvation that comes only from Him.

Rather, we have been *“created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”*.

As redeemed men, we are called to rest our ear upon the Heart of God, to listen attentively to what we are to do day by day. May the Holy Spirit dispose us to do the Will of God willingly, immediately, and entirely, just as the holy angels do!

Through our word, through the transformation of our heart according to that of Jesus, and through *‘the good works, which God prepared beforehand’*, we can cooperate in the

building up of the Kingdom of God, in which Our Lord exercises His dominion of love together with the Queen of hearts, our Mother Mary. To this Kingdom, which is not the work of human hands, all men are called.