

25. November 2024

The flock of the Lamb

Rev 14:1-5

Next in my vision I saw Mount Zion, and standing on it the Lamb who had with him a hundred and forty-four thousand people, all with his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. I heard a sound coming out of heaven like the sound of the ocean or the roar of thunder; it was like the sound of harpists playing their harps. There before the throne they were singing a new hymn in the presence of the four living creatures and the elders, a hymn that could be learnt only by the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the world. These are the sons who have kept their virginity and not been defiled with women; they follow the Lamb wherever he goes; they, out of all people, have been redeemed to be the first-fruits for God and for the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths and no fault can be found in them.

Today we are told of that multitude who have remained faithful to the Lord; of those who, through persecution and tribulations, have preserved the Name of the Lord and of their Father, which is deeply inscribed in them, so that they were able to stand firm with the help of God. They sing the song of the redeemed, who follow the Lamb wherever He leads them. Their whole life has become a praise to God and in them He is glorified; their whole life is a song that pleases the Lord...

They "are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

Here we find obedience out of love for God. It is not the true way of the Lord to follow one's own desires and ideas, but rather to follow the call that has been addressed to us: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you"*, says the Lord to His disciples (Jn 15:16a). The paths we are to travel have been laid out for us by God's gracious Providence. As for us, we only have to see to it that the Will of God is increasingly fulfilled in us, that the Lamb is able to guide us and that we know how to identify and follow His guidance in an attitude of attentive listening. This requires a serious spiritual journey that detaches us from our self-centeredness and binds us to the Lamb of God.

The retinue of the Lamb *"are those who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins"...*

It is impossible to follow the Lord and, at the same time, give in to the various appetites of the flesh. It is necessary to renounce disordered sensuality, whose maximum expression is sexual disorientation; and to yearn with all one's strength for purity of heart and body. Even those who in their lives have gone astray and lost their physical virginity can, through a process of sincere conversion, become virgins again on a spiritual level and recover a certain integrity and innocence, when the Blood of the Lamb purifies them profoundly.

Virginity means preserving the heart undivided for the One who is the Bridegroom of souls; not tolerating in ourselves anything that could interfere with the love for this Bridegroom; not entering into illegitimate relationships with the world or being seduced by its deceitful allure... In other words, to express it in the language of Revelation, not entering into any relationship with the "Whore of Babylon" (cf. Rev 17 and 18).

The Lamb's retinue are also those *"in whose mouth was found no lie"*.

To them it would be alien to pretend with a lie. They are confessors, and will not resort to either simulation or lying for their own benefit. They abhor lying and pursue it to its root, to banish it from their whole being. Their soul is transparent before the Lord.

The lie, on the other hand, under which one seeks to hide one's own interests, infects the whole being of man. This is alien to those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...

Those who belong to His retinue are those who *"have no blemish"...*

In the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul says: *"Let your behaviour be free of murmuring and complaining so that you remain faultless and pure, unspoilt children of God surrounded by a deceitful and underhand brood, shining out among them like bright stars in the world"* (Phil 2:14-15).

May the Lord grant that we belong to this multitude of the Lamb, which He Himself is gathering from among all the nations and tribes (cf. Rev. 5:9-10)!