

27. November 2024

The Victors over the Beast

Rev 15:1-4

And I saw in heaven another sign, great and wonderful: seven angels were bringing the seven plagues that are the last of all, because they exhaust the anger of God. I seemed to be looking at a sea of crystal suffused with fire, and standing by the lake of glass, those who had fought against the beast and won, and against his statue and the number which is his name. They all had harps from God, and they were singing the hymn of Moses, the servant of God, and the hymn of the Lamb: How great and wonderful are all your works, Lord God Almighty; upright and true are all your ways, King of nations. Who does not revere and glorify your name, O Lord? For you alone are holy, and all nations will come and adore you for the many acts of saving justice you have shown.

Yes, there are victors over the Beast, over the enemy of God which wants to rise above all and usurp in our hearts the place that belongs to God alone! These victors have not worshipped the image of the Beast, in spite of the coercions. They are those who have remained faithful to God in the midst of great trials and have not bowed down to Satan and his henchmen. They are the overcomers, the martyrs, the confessors, the faithful...!

The Apocalypse does not hide from us the great battle in which we Christians are immersed. We face all kinds of temptations, and in these times they are becoming more and more global. But where darkness tries to attack the children of light, there too the grace of God acts with power. Those who triumphed over the Beast, knew how to resist by the grace of God; and not by their own strength. That is why it is so important that, in the present time, we put all our trust in the grace of the Lord. There where all external securities vanish, both at the level of this confused world and in the tottering boat of the Church, we are called to sing the song of Moses together with the overcomers:

*“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak,
and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
May my teaching drop as the rain,
my speech distill as the dew,*

*like gentle rain upon the tender grass,
and like showers upon the herb.
For I will proclaim the name of the Lord;
ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he” (Deut 32:1-4).*

The praise of God is a powerful weapon against the temptation of despair, which easily attacks us when we become too preoccupied with worrying news or when negative events accumulate and cloud the soul. We must see it as a temptation, because the Spirit of God, on the other hand, will always show us a way out.

Precisely in those moments when there seems to be no way out, we must remember the overcomers, who testify that God sustained them in all afflictions. When the soul is distressed by many negative news and sadness infects it, we are tempted to look for a way out on a natural level. And this may distract us, but it does not overcome the dark... Instead, by consciously turning to the Lord, by reciting a psalm or a canticle, by invoking the Holy Spirit, God can once again shine His light in our soul.

In these troubled times, we should store up spiritual treasures (cf. Mt 6:20); or, in other words, increase our store of oil (cf. Mt 25:4). The Apocalypse makes us see insistently that times of persecution are increasing. Those who do not close their ears and eyes will be able to see that this is already happening. We must be aware that there will not only be attacks on the Christian faith from outside, which would be relatively easy to identify. Even more dangerous is the relativization of our faith and morals, which weakens us from within and can influence us in various ways, including manipulation.

For this reason it is necessary to have in us a kind of "inner cell" for the encounter with God; a cell to which we can withdraw without lending our ear or our heart to any message hostile to God. In this inner cell should be engraved some songs of praise, words of Sacred Scripture, various prayers, to which we can have recourse at all times. It would be good for us to collect all these treasures in times when they are still accessible to us. Other times may come when it becomes more difficult.

But all this should not be done out of fear, but in the spirit of Christian prudence and trust in God. Then we will be armed to overcome in the strength of the Lord.