



4. December 2024

The Eyes of Faith

Is 25:6-10a

On this mountain, for all peoples, the Lord Sabaoth is preparing a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, of succulent food, of well-strained wines. On this mountain, he has destroyed the veil which used to veil all peoples, the mantle enveloping all nations; he has destroyed death for ever. The Lord has wiped away the tears from every cheek; he has taken his people's shame away everywhere on earth, for the Lord has spoken. And on that day, it will be said, 'Look, this is our God, in him we put our hope that he should save us, this is the Lord, we put our hope in him. Let us exult and rejoice since he has saved us.' For the Lord's hand will rest on this mountain, and Moab will be trodden under his feet as straw is trodden into the dung-heap.

With His coming into the world and through all the works of salvation, the Lord tore the veil that covered all peoples and the mantle that enveloped the nations. The light of the gospel has reached the ends of the earth and the Holy Spirit has led many to the knowledge of the truth. We have an open access to God! Each one of us can approach Jesus and, through Him, reach the Father. So, by sending His Son, God has already fulfilled the promises, and this "hour of grace" is still in force. The way of salvation is offered to everyone! The veil has been removed. The banquet is prepared; the Lord's Table abundantly served.

But the promise we heard in today's reading has not yet been entirely fulfilled... There is still something pending, which we can look forward to. Rarely can we know for certain how and in what way God will fulfill His promises to the full. We usually do not know exactly what is meant, for example, by an "invitation to all peoples". There are certain things that will only be understood when they are fulfilled. But, yes, we can stand firm in the faith that what has been foretold will really happen, thus doing our part to bring about the fulfillment of the promises. It is not, therefore, a matter of merely passive waiting, but of collaborating in the Lord's work, so that the Holy Spirit may

lead all peoples to faith and so that people may become aware of the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, Who conquered death.

This attitude of firm faith is important for our journey of following Christ, precisely when we recognize the sinfulness and imperfection in the lives of people and in our own lives. The words and promises of the Lord are stronger than all the powers of destruction! At times, when we are faced with the most difficult circumstances of life or we note the critical situation in which the world and the Church find themselves, words such as those we heard today in the reading may seem far removed from reality. But it is there that faith is called from us, which, even in the dark, abandons itself in the Word of the Lord and clings to Him.

The same must apply in relation to the situation that our holy Church is going through. It is necessary to face it in the right way. If one has eyes to see, one will be able to see on many levels its weakened state. If one simply closes one's eyes to this reality and, with a merely human optimism, justifies everything wrong that is happening, one would not be facing the situation from faith, any more than one who sinks into despair.

Faith assures us that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church (cf. Mt 16:18). To this we cling! From this word of the Lord comes true hope. But this does not mean that evil cannot enter the Church; it does mean that it cannot destroy her. Faith also teaches us that the Lord uses everything for the good of His own (cf. Rom 8:28) and that, after the Passion and Crucifixion, comes the Resurrection. This also counts for the Church.

Thus, the text of the prophet Isaiah that we heard today becomes an invitation to us to place our hope always and at all times in the Lord and in His Word. At the same time, we must recognize how God's promises are fulfilled. In this way, God's light touches us and we begin to see with the eyes of faith. The many shifts of life and its difficulties can no longer confuse us, but we cling to God's promises with firm and unshakable faith, and thus anchor ourselves in the certainty that, in the end, He will bring everything to a successful conclusion.