

7. December 2024

A joy to the angels

Eph 3:8-12

Reading from the Memorial of Saint Ambrose

*To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in[a] God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him.*

According to the words of the Apostle, the wisdom of God is to be made manifest even to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This means that the evangelisation of the Gentiles, and thus the fulfilment of God's plan for humanity, takes place through the Church, before the whole of heaven as a witness.

This dimension is astonishing, even if we do not usually think of it in such a way, because we tend to focus primarily on the Church militant. The small service we render to the Church here on earth, participating in the proclamation of the Gospel according to the gifts and talents that have been given to us, is closely watched from heaven. This statement of the Apostle to the Gentiles makes us understand that the principalities and powers do not have a certain omniscience, knowing exactly what is going to happen, as only God Himself knows.

Here is another motivation for the proclamation of the Gospel! Of course, we are aware of the cooperation that exists between the Church militant and the Church triumphant, as well as the Purgatory, whose members need our prayers and sacrifices in order to attain the beatific vision. We also know of the constant help of the saints and angels who support, encourage, console, inspire and correct us - all when we invite them to do so... But in light of today's reading, it seems that there is also something we can do for them.

Angels love God, and because they love Him, His glorification is their joy. So we can increase their joy to the extent that we live up - hopefully fully - to God's plan for us. Otherwise, if we do not take the place that God has assigned to us and thus do not unfold all the fruitfulness that would be possible, we can assume that we are depriving the angels of this joy and, in a way, saddening them. Each one in particular is important!

Isn't it a wonderful prospect to know that we are part of the heavenly Church? Without placing too much importance on ourselves, we can feel the responsibility to respond to the call that has been addressed to us. First of all, before God Himself, what a great honour it is not only to receive redemption, but also to be called to cooperate in the work of salvation, even though we are weak human beings! What will it be like for our Father to see that we are trying to fulfil His will completely and that we are willing to leave behind our earthly interests? Let us think of the Lord when He looked with sadness at the rich young man who, although he led a good life according to God's commandments, did not respond to the greatest invitation He had addressed to him (cf. Mt 19:16-22).

To the joy of God is added the joy of the angels, and certainly the joy of all those who are already with the Lord. If there is great joy in heaven over a sinner who is converted (cf. Lk 15:10), over one who finds his way home, then we can be sure that every day we spend in the sincere following of Christ and in the service of the Kingdom of God will increase the joy of heaven, because the wisdom of God will be revealed even more to the principalities and powers.

I have already mentioned the purgative Church... Our service is also a great joy, a consolation and, moreover, a great help for all those who are part of it to reach their longed-for goal: unification with God.

I believe that we should keep in mind this perspective that our beloved Apostle to the Gentiles opens up to us and allow it to enter our hearts. This is all the more important today, when the proclamation of the Gospel in our Church is increasingly weakened, while the pretence of inculturation, without a true discernment of spirits, often produces the strangest and most poisonous fruits.

At a time when there may be little official joy when a Jew comes to the Catholic Church or a Muslim converts to the Lord, we must lift our eyes to the heavenly Church. She will strengthen and help us, so that we will not be misled in our efforts; so that God's eternal plan, brought to fulfilment through Jesus Christ our Lord, will be revealed in all its fullness.

Finally, let us turn our gaze to the Virgin Mary... How much joy there is in heaven because she gave her unconditional "yes" to God's plan of salvation! In her we see how much dignity is given to the human person by making us sharers in the work of redemption.

Finally, let us think of the return of the Lord: it is near! May the Spirit of God awaken all of us to serve in the Lord's vineyard and shake off all sleepiness. Heaven is waiting too!

NOTE: Since today is the 7th day of the month, which we always dedicate in a special way to our Heavenly Father, we want to invite you to listen to the "3 minutes for Abba", which is a small impulse that we publish daily in order to deepen the relationship of trust with God the Father. You can find them in the following links:

-Telegram: <https://t.me/threeminutesforAbba>

-Webpage: <http://en.elijamission.net/category/3-minutes-for-god-the-father/>