

20. June 2025

LETTER TO THE ROMANS

The desolation of the nations



Rom 1:18-25

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

St Paul introduces us to his theological reflection on the pagan world. The confusion and desolation among the Gentiles did not come about without fault. God had revealed enough to men so that they could recognise with their minds His invisible presence in the works of creation. They were called to recognise God, to give Him thanks and to glorify Him. But those who did not respond to this invitation addressed to their reason did not draw the right conclusions. They therefore became irrational: “*They became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.*”

This shows that all men must give account of their lives to God, even those who do not know God's revelation to the people of Israel or the coming of the Redeemer. God will judge them justly according to their knowledge and their adherence to the truth.

In the case described by St. Paul, not recognising God through reason had serious consequences. Instead of knowing and glorifying Him, men fell into idolatry and

worshipped the creature instead of the Creator. Thus, they succumbed to deception, for behind the various idols demons could hide and exert their influence over them, trapping them in confusion and ignorance. Religious confusion also spread to the moral sphere, as St. Paul clearly describes in the following verses:

“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.” (Rom 1:26-27).

In this passage, Sacred Scripture speaks clearly about practised homosexuality. According to St Paul, it is the consequence of confused thinking and a departure from the order of creation. Today, in many Western countries, homosexuality is considered a natural and acceptable form of sexual behaviour, and is sometimes even promoted. In some cases, this view has even found its way into the Church.

However, it is incompatible with the words we hear today from St. Paul, as well as with other passages from Sacred Scripture and with the authentic teaching of the Church. This example clearly shows how dangerous it is for modernist and anti-Christian currents to penetrate the Church with their errors and spread like poisonous leaven. Instead of helping people with these tendencies to adjust their lives to God's commandments with the help of grace, they are left alone, at the mercy of their inclinations. If one is no longer convinced that practised homosexuality is a disordered and sinful way of life, then one will not pray for people who find themselves in these circumstances.

St. Paul goes on to describe the consequences of people living according to their inclinations without knowing God:

"And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless,

heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them." (Rom 1:28-32).

Here is a 'catalogue of vices' that arise when human beings do not turn to God, do not sincerely convert, and do not order their lives according to His commandments. In the next chapter, Paul continues with this inventory of the sinful world.

Perhaps today we no longer like to hear such lists, because they refer to a life far from God. This is understandable. However, our faith does not only involve praising God's mercy — although this is undoubtedly the first thing — but also pointing out the consequences of sin. Only in this way will we become aware of the magnitude of God's love and mercy, who did not shy away from becoming man to rescue us from our straying and our ungodliness.