

27. September 2022

## The Lord protects the just

Following the traditional calendar, today we commemorate the martyrs Cosmas and Damian. Therefore, today we will listen to the reading corresponding to this memorial. In the following link you can also find a meditation based on the reading of the saint who is celebrated today in the new calendar, St. Vincent de Paul:  
<http://en.elijamission.net/god-chose-the-weak/>

Wis 5:15-20

*But the upright live for ever, their recompense is with the Lord, and the Most High takes care of them. So they will receive the glorious crown and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand; for he will shelter them with his right hand and with his arm he will shield them. For armour he will take his jealous love, he will arm creation to punish his enemies; he will put on justice as a breastplate, and for helmet wear his forthright judgement; he will take up invincible holiness for shield, of his pitiless wrath he will forge a sword, and the universe will march with him to fight the reckless.*

In speaking of the "righteous," Holy Scripture refers to those persons who earnestly strive to fulfill the Will of God. The righteous will receive their reward and the Lord will give them all that He has prepared for them.

*"The souls of the upright are in the hands of God"* - says the Book of Wisdom elsewhere (3:1), and today's passage assures us that the right hand of the Lord protects and shields them. God's promises are truthful and irrevocable! They stand in all circumstances, especially when the righteous (in Christian terminology we would say: "the faithful") are in danger.

It is important to understand these words in their full depth, so that we know they do not refer primarily to the protection of bodily life, as if the righteous were exempt from all the dangers and evils that beset us in this world. Rather, they apply to the deeper dimension of life, especially its transcendental dimension. The Lord wants to keep His own close for all eternity and to reward them for their fidelity. Thus, He promises them that, under His protection, they will attain eternal life and, come what may, they will

not be lost. It is up to the faithful, for their part, to persevere in God's grace and to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The words that follow in today's Bible reading bring to mind the "spiritual armor" described in the Letter to the Ephesians (6:11-18). The faithful must protect themselves against the temptations of this world, against the wiles of the devil and against their own flesh, when it wants to rebel against the spirit (Rom 7:26). But they are not alone in their struggle! If this were so, it would be impossible to be victorious...

The Lord Himself puts on "the armor of His zeal" for our souls. He makes use of the powers of His Creation against the enemy. He, the Holy and Just One, knows how to use the words of His mouth as a sword. He separates truth from falsehood and puts the powers hostile to God in their place.

But the Lord invites His own to fight on His side in this great combat, to enlist in the "army of the Lamb" to fight against the "fools", as the reading says. These fools are those who, in their blindness, rebel against God. First of all, they are the fallen angels. The Lord will send them to their eternal destiny.

But we must also take into account those people who have allowed themselves to be seduced by the spirit of evil, who live in involuntary ignorance and do not yet know the light of faith. However much it may seem that our efforts are in vain, as long as the possibility of conversion exists, we must not give up the fight to win souls, even the most obstinate ones.

A fundamental weapon in this struggle is the proclamation of the Gospel, as St. Paul tells us: "*Stand your ground (...), have eagerness to spread the Gospel of peace*" (Eph 6:14-15). Through the proclamation of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, we snatch away those prey to darkness. In this confrontation, the Virgin Mary was entrusted with crushing the head of the serpent (cf. Gen 3:15). With the armor of the Lord, the faithful are well equipped.