

7. April 2024

Draw near to the living stone

We will listen to yesterday's reading from the traditional calendar:

1 Pe 2:1-10

So put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander. Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame." To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,[a] that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

How crucial it is for our discipleship that we work on our own hearts, that we overcome our evil inclinations or at least manage to restrain them so that they do not take over and darken our lives! We need to be aware of this again and again, for the effectiveness of God's grace in our lives also depends on how free our hearts are to cooperate with it and to let the light of the Lord shine through as transparently as possible. In one of his apostolic exhortations, Pope John Paul II said: "Holiness, then, must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the Church" (Christifidelis laici). It is in this light that we must understand the words of St Peter in today's reading.

What a sublime vocation the Apostle presents to us, reminding us that we ourselves are "living stones" with which a "spiritual house" is being built! It is the Mystical Body of

Christ, of which the faithful are members, if they remain faithful to their vocation. Saint Peter even speaks of a "*chosen race*", a people adopted as God's own.

We are this people, and as such we have been entrusted with a primary mission: "*But you are a chosen race... that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*".

These words are addressed in the first place to those Christians who, having been pagans, have found the light of faith: "*Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy*". This is certainly true for all of us who seek to work in the vineyard of the Lord and to fulfil the task that comes from our specific vocation.

To proclaim the wonders of God means, first of all, to bear witness to the incomparable work of our Father in sending us His Son as the Saviour of the world. This is the perennial message that all the faithful are called to proclaim in a spirit of holiness.

Let us listen once more to Pope John Paul II: "The call to mission derives, of its nature, from the call to holiness. A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness:" (Redemptoris Missio).

If we fulfil this condition and give witness in accordance with the authentic teaching of the Church, there is hope that holy fruits will grow in mission even in these dark times.

If, in times of crisis, people realise that faith in God is a firm support in life and that the love of Christ is the only security on which they can always count, they will open their hearts, believe the message of the Gospel and trust those who bring it to them in a spirit of holiness.

Although the conversion of people is not in our hands, nor can we achieve it simply by our will, and thus see the fruits of our efforts, it is our responsibility to strive for holiness. Our Father is able to integrate into His plan of salvation all the acts we perform on the path of holiness, often in secret, in such a way that love increases on earth and the light shines more brightly.

In this way, all the faithful are offered the possibility of collaborating in God's great work and, at the same time, of becoming fruitful in their own efforts towards holiness. On the path of holiness, everything we do in union with God's will can contribute to the great goal: that the Kingdom of God may take on an ever greater shape on earth. How necessary it is to proclaim to a world so far from God how merciful the Lord is and how He calls all people into His kingdom of love!

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/>