

24. October 2024

All the fullness of God

Eph 3:14-21

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

With St Paul, we too bow our knees before the Father, before the miraculous presence of Jesus in the tabernacle and before the Holy Spirit, sent to be with us always. The Christian's relationship with God is supernatural. It is not merely a natural religiosity that God sowed in our hearts when He created us; but, as we heard in yesterday's meditation, it comes from God's revelation, which calls us to embrace faith and to follow Christ. In this way we can worship God in three persons, a knowledge that our Christian faith gives us and which is of great importance.

God wants to share His richness with us and make us partakers of it. He does this in many ways, especially through the Holy Spirit, who has been poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). The Church teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. And this love, in which we are to be rooted and grounded, increases the strength and power within us.

Our faith must be powerful, which does not mean human strength; it means being firmly grounded in the truth. We must know our faith, and we must continually strengthen and deepen it by listening to the right teaching. It strengthens us in our convictions, especially in these times when many things have become confused in the Church itself. The Word of God is the light of our path (cf. Ps 119:105), on which we can lean firmly.

Fortitude is one of the gifts that God has instilled within us, which enables us to profess our faith, to overcome the disadvantages we may suffer for the Lord's sake and even to lay down our lives for Him. The gift of fortitude goes beyond the virtue of courage, however praiseworthy, and helps us to take every step towards total surrender to God, towards the fulfilment of our vocation. It is His Spirit who works this in us, and this Spirit we can call upon and live in intimate communion with Him.

He also gives us a deeper understanding of the love of Christ, for He reminds us of all that Jesus said and did (cf. Jn 14:26) and reveals its meaning to us.

I can only encourage you to enter into an intimate dialogue with the Holy Spirit: to talk to Him, to ask Him to open our inner ears to understand His promptings and to perceive His gentle but firm guidance. He is our divine friend and our teacher! The Lord called Him "Paraclete", that is, the Comforter (cf. Jn 15:26). Indeed, He consoles us with His divine presence and, as long as we do not close ourselves off, He will always show us the way forward, the next step to be taken; He will encourage us to patience and trust.

In this way, two very important statements from today's reading come to life. On the one hand, God's fullness grows in us. As we listen to and obey the guidance of our "divine friend", God will be able to fill us more and more with His love. And that is what it is all about! St Paul even speaks of filling us with "all" the fullness of God. Our human, and therefore imperfect and weak, love is purified and strengthened by the presence of the Holy Spirit. He even enables us to act in a way that is moved by divine love, which far surpasses our human capacity to love.

Therefore - and this is the second affirmation of the reading - God, through His power at work in us (that is, through His Holy Spirit), can do far more than we could ask or imagine, because we have entrusted Him with the guidance of our lives. Thus God is glorified in the Church - of which we are members (cf. 1 Cor 12:27) - and in Christ, who is its head (cf. Col 1:18).