

5. August

Novena to God the Father Day 8: "Loving our Father"

The best thing we can give our Father is our sincere love. Let us remember what Jesus said: *"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me"* (Jn 14:21). This is the constant and necessary response for God's love not only to go out to us, but to penetrate us. As long as we do not live according to the commandments, God will knock at the door of our heart to let Him in. If we open the door, the Father, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, will come to dwell in us (cf. Jn 14:23).

The Father establishes His throne in our hearts above all through the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit in us. In fact, the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5).

When God sees that we are striving to listen to Him and to do His will, an intimate friendship can begin. In this way He can teach us more and more subtly and His love can transform us more and more into the image of His Son. This transformation happens especially through the movements and invitations of the Holy Spirit, who does not usually shout or make noise, but comes to us like the gentle breeze experienced by the prophet Elijah. We must follow Him, responding to the love that now dwells within us and comes to meet us on every side.

Can anything glorify God more than our response to His love? It is through love that we can know God, not only through His works, but in His very being. Scripture testifies to this: *"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him"* (1 Jn 4:16).

So, if love has been poured into our hearts, we need only follow its instructions to grow and glorify God.

Let us repeat: the more we listen to the Holy Spirit and give Him room in our lives, the more we will love the Father. Then it will be divine love that unfolds in us. In this way

we can participate in the mystery of the love of the Holy Trinity, because the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son.

It is this same love that impels us to good works that glorify God and serve humanity. When we obey the Holy Spirit, we are transformed and become like the face of Jesus, coming to think and act like the Lord Himself, loving and glorifying the Father more and more as His only begotten Son.

God's love now impels us to go out in search of souls, inviting them to come closer to their Father. Indeed, mission means sharing in God's desire to bring His children home to His heart. What could please God more than for us to accept His love more and more deeply and, moved by it, to do the works of His love?

The Apostle Paul speaks of evangelisation as an "obligation" (cf. 1 Cor 9:16). It is a duty born of love, or, to put it more beautifully, of the "sweet yoke of love", which moves him to work tirelessly for the Kingdom of God. With a fervent heart, St Paul built up and cared for Christian communities, had compassion for people's needs and proclaimed the Gospel "in season and out of season" (cf. 2 Tim 4:2).

All this glorifies our Father and enables us to grow day by day in our love for Him!