



61st Year

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THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH

As the sacred text of the Old Testament informs us, in the first chapter of the book Genesis, in the development of the creation of the world, the presence of natural darkness was preceded by the creation and the appearance of natural light. The Apostle Paul also mentions this, presenting the passage "God who said let light shine in the darkness" (2 Cor. 4:6).

When God created heaven and earth, in the area of the vast space, only darkness prevailed. "and the darkness covered the abyss". (Gen. 1:2). Then the natural light made its presence: "And God said. Let there be light and light was made" (v. 3). And from then on the distinction between light and darkness began. "And God divided between the light and between the darkness" (v. 4). Then the miracle of life also appeared on the earth, beneath the lifegiving light of the natural sun, with man as the chief creation.

The special gift of God to man

Man however, in relation to the other living creatures, had the exceptional privilege, aside from seeing natural light, to enjoy, feel and be illumined by the spiritual light, the divine light, the light of the lifegiving grace of the Creator. The disobedience to the divine will, the ancestral sin, brought sin in the life of men through the devil. Resulting in the nous of the first created humans being darkened and them losing the spiritual light, the illumination of God.

And while the natural light of the sun, despite the disobedience, was the only one which remained illumining and consoling the life of men, the darkness of sin with the shadow of death slipped in also as a constant threat against the life of the world. And until Christ came, the race of men was "a people who sat in the darkness of the spiritual ignorance of the true God and with the threat of spiritual and physical death as a shadow in their personal life" (Mt. 4:16).

The person of Christ comprises an event of divine philanthropy

However the philanthropy of God gave a second opportunity to the human race to regain the gift of spiritual illumination. For this reason "he shone in our hearts to enlighten us in the knowledge of His glory, with the presence of the person of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The presence of Christ in the world as God and as man, in other words as Godman, put to flight the shadow of spiritual darkness and the light of Christ and the rejuvenation of the world took its place. Characteristic is the theological language of the beloved disciple of Christ, John the Evangelist: "In him life was, and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4). In other words, the life of Christ is that which enlightens men.

The light of Christ is a mystery of life and salvation

To us believing Christians, from the moment we received the light of His grace with the mystery of Holy Baptism, sin was deadened which brought death in our life. Because with our triple immersion in the cleansing water of the baptismal font we partake in the three day burial and Resurrection of Christ. We are drenched by the Light of the Resurrection and we become partakers in the new life in Christ which the Lord inaugurated, as the Ap. Paul tells us "in his death we were baptized...so that we could proceed to a new way of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

This sacramental experience in the language of the Fathers of the Church is called "lifegiving deadening". Because, as the Apostle again explains to us, with the grace of holy Baptism sin is deadened with the power of Christ, and death is abolished. And this for the life of the Resurrected Christ to be also revealed in us. In other words, for our body to feel the grace of incorruption and our soul the grace of immortality, in other words life from the dead.

The light of divine knowledge and human education

It is a fact, that in our age, knowledge has been so widened with the help of academia and of electronic technology, that it has become worldwide, in all the lengths and widths of the earth. However the question is, if this knowledge has the power to deliver man from the results of sin. If, in other words, it can give a perspective of eternity, future and spiritual value to the gift of life, to the journey of humanity. Every optimistic answer clashes with the fact of the existence of sin and of corruption. And this panhuman drama is not exorcized either with the progress of knowledge, but neither also with the achievements of academics. Death awaits mercilessly to seal every human work.

In this problematic the words of the Nazarene are today more timely than ever: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even if he dies shall live" (Jn. 11:25). This assurance of the Godman to the universe is the natural and spiritual guarantee for the future of humanity.

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