



61<sup>st</sup> Year

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## THE DIVINE PROMISES

In the Holy Scripture the promises of God to man, from the foundation of the world are documented. In the beginning of creation and after the fall of the First-created humans He promised that He would send His Son in order to abolish the sin which was committed and to trample on the head of sin who was the devil (Gen. 3:15). And the promise became a reality with the birth from the Virgin of Christ and His delivering work.

Also, as the apostle Paul mentions, whatever God promised to Abraham He realized. He placed him in the land of promise, made him the father of many nations. The phrase "blessing I shall bless you" is characteristic which certifies the trustworthiness of the words of God.

But our Lord Jesus Christ also promised to His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit after His ascent to the heavens. And with the event of Pentecost this promise of Christ was sealed.

### **The promises of God comprise an anchor of hope**

There are also promises which were given and which have not yet been realized. The Second Coming of the Lord, the day of judgment and the inheritance of the kingdom of the heavens are promises which await their realization in time.

Firm faith and sure hope are necessary on the part of Christians so that they see these great promises of the Lord becoming real events. Even though the righteous ones foretaste in part, the grace of those things promised by the Lord, despite this, it is necessary for them to be armed with patience and long-suffering for the fulfillment of the divine promises.

Let us not forget how much humanity had waited, the Prophets and the fathers of the Old Testament, until the promised Messiah Christ would come. How much Abraham waited to enjoy everything that God had promised him with intensity. "Thus having long-suffered he achieved the promise" the apostle Paul tells us (Heb. 6:15).

Usually God, as St. Nicodemus mentions, delays and in human terms delays to realize what was promised. When Christ learned that His friend Lazarus died, He told His disciples: "I am going to wake him up" (Jn. 11:11) meaning to resurrect him. But when He arrived at his home Lazarus had already died. And his sister Martha complained to the Lord saying: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (verse 21). In simple words she said that the Lord delayed coming. However He had already promised that He would resurrect him. And He did it. This delay did not prevent the miracle. It revealed the glory and the power of God.

### **Why God delays in His promises**

God delays in order to test and to increase our faith in Him and His words and to make us firm in His Church. For the hope of the salvation of believers to become certain and to silence those who constantly slander and dispute His promises. Furthermore, as the apostle writes, "a hope seen, is not hope" (Rom. 8:24). The believers with the grace of the Holy Spirit see the truths of the Gospel being certified both in the time of human history, as well as in the spiritual area of the Church triumphant. God gave us examples that we not have little faith, but as the apostle Paul says "that we have great encouragement to keep our hope in all that we await" (Heb. 6:18). Our confession "I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the future age" is not nostalgia, but an event of faith by the grace in our God Almighty.

## **Human realism and the hope of the Church**

The contemporary world has been founded on scientific realism and human logic. And up to a point this validation of contemporary culture is correct in order to avoid the superstitions of the past and ignorance. However there are many impasses in this manner of contemporary life. I wonder who guarantees the flow of the present, when without forewarning geopolitical changes create destabilization in everything that we knew up to this point? Why are social changes not foreseen in a timely manner? Why can't even the near future be defined with the speed with which new upheavals occur in social groups, peoples and nations? Who can seal with certainty a worldwide peace? Which authorities diligently keep their promises and don't alter them analogous to the factors, each time?

The Church has an unshakable factor, the realism of faith which is Christ, which does not change, does not pretend, is not altered. He remains unto the ages. Not because He is a static value, but because as Son of God He knows the present and the future of men. And He has secured with the power and enlightenment of the All Holy Spirit, which breathes in the spiritual life of believers, sure hope both for their journey in this world, as well as for their journey beyond this world, which He himself calls the Kingdom of the Heavens. The area of the Church both here on earth as well as there in eternal life, is an area of comfort, trust, life with an eternal character and divine reward. Whoever has trust and believes in the will of God also has sure and unashamed hope. He makes the future present and utilizes the present with the future. Because faith in the true God unites the obsolete with the eternal. The believer lives the divine promises as eternal present.

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