



## VATICAN - "AVE MARIA" by Mgr Luciano Alimandi - The "sea of Love"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - The Lord often used parables to explain with effective similitude the mystery of His kingdom, opening the minds and hearts of his disciples to enable them to share the marvellous vocation to which he had called each of them individually: holiness! We, his children, can imitate the Master, using images for example from daily life to announce the Gospel. One image, often mentioned by the saints, preachers of the word, spiritual authors etc., is without a doubt that of the "sea".

The similitude helps us understand for example the immensity of God's Love for humanity: it is vast, deep, immense ... in a words, boundless like an ocean. This love of Christ, of the one and indivisible Christ, who is the same "yesterday, today and always", makes no preference of persons, He gives himself to everyone as in the white Host. Here the Presence of Christ is total, in each little host, it makes no difference if consecrated at Mass in a great basilica or in the smallest chapel, Jesus is always the same: God Man! He is like the sea: He bathes those who immerse themselves in Him. When we immerse ourselves in the sea it is because we have left dry land.

How sweet to think that when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, it is like diving into an endless ocean, where Jesus receives those who have received Him! Being immersed in Christ, like fish in the water. This should be the habitual state of every Christian. Jesus said: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person" (Jn 6, 56), "Remain in me, as I in you" (Jn 15,4). Eucharistic communion with Jesus is absolutely essential for Christian life.

However we cannot enter the "sea of Christ", wearing a sort of "diving suit", like divers use to go to the depths of the sea for long periods of immersion. Our egoism is like a 'diving suit' which isolates from the sea of God's mercy even those who are immersed in it: it is not enough to receive the Body of Christ in order to be changed into Him! We must deny self day after day. Sin, born of pride and selfishness, isolates us from the "sea of Christ" preventing us from entering into communion with God's humility and goodness, making us impermeable to His grace. How sad and isolated is a self-centred life!

When instead, we deny self, we overcome selfishness and give ourselves to God and to neighbour, then our hearts open, we escape from the 'diving suit' and are bathed in the grace of God's unlimited Love.

The Gospel, page by page, teaches us to step gradually ever deeper into the "sea of Christ". "Duc in altum" (Lk 5, 4), "put out into the deep", we are told by Jesus and by the Church: the more we lose ourselves in God, the more we find true life!

The more we grow in familiarity with the Gospel and in trust in Jesus, the more we will see our life change. It will no longer be the same because the "sea of Christ" will carry us far away and gradually our lives will lose those harsh profiles and false contents typical of pride and selfishness.

We will become increasingly one with the mercy of the Lord and "His sea", "His Love", will become "our sea.

Of course it takes a good dose of courage to lose ourselves, to dive into the sea of God. We are afraid of putting out into the deep, of leaving behind the 'old' habits, connected with what is corruptible, but if we let ourselves be "captured" by Christ, we will find our home in Him and soon we be unable to live even one day without Him. It was the experience of the "sea" that made Saint Paul exclaim: "Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ-can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence? (...) neither death nor life...nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God" (Rom 8, 35...).

Over this "sea of Christ" shines a Star, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who shows seafarers the way to the haven. The name "Mary", also means "sea": the goodness of Our Lady, like the sea, is unlimited! So in the "sea of Christ" we find His Mother who teaches us better than anyone else how to sail the sea, how to immerse ourselves in the deep and discover the inexhaustible riches, there for everyone. We only have to open the door of our will for Jesus to enter: "Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come

in to share a meal at that person's side.” (Rev 3, 20). (Agenzia Fides 28/5/2008)