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VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Mgr Luciano Alimandi - The humble way

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - “At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. 26Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.” (Mt 11, 25-30).

It goes without saying that the way with which the Lord chose to reveal himself to us, to tells us of Father's infinite love for us, is the way of the humble, the way of humility and simplicity. His announcement of the Kingdom of God is addressed first of all to the "poor in spirit”: “How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (Mt 5, 3). This way of humility found the men and women who met Jesus and even the apostles unprepared. They found it hard to imagine that God Almighty could stoop so low as to take on our human nature, to take on “the condition of a servant” (Phil 2, 7) and share our condition is everything except. St Paul came to realise this: “God chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, ” (1Cor 1, 27).

If our way of thinking and acting is in keeping with the humility of the Gospel we will be among those who are ready for the Kingdom of God, to learn from Jesus, otherwise we will be shut out: “'In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. ” (Mt 18,3).

For Himself and those who would follower him, instead of the ways of human importance and power Jesus chose the way of humble service: “'You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' ” (Mt 20, 25-28).

“Servant” means this and if the Master became a servant how much more must his disciples learn to serve! In the logic of the Kingdom they are “useless servants” (cfr. Lk 17, 10). If we follow this way of humility, from the Infant Jesus to the Christ crucified, the Gospel assures us we will share the glory of the Risen Lord. Those who “humble” themselves, the Gospel promises, will be “raised up” (cfr. Mt 23, 12), “the least” on earth will be the “most important" in the Kingdom of Heaven (cfr. Mk 10, 31). The way of humility teaches us to live with our eyes set on heaven, climbing the ladder to heaven day by day with steps of love for God and the people around us who are his representatives.

A true disciple of Christ must climb the stairs of humility and not let himself be dragged down by the opposite spirit. As always, Jesus speaks clearly: “But I say this to you: offer no resistance to the wicked. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; 40if someone wishes to go to law with you to get your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41And if anyone requires you to go one mile, go two miles with him. 42Give to anyone who asks you, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away. 'You have heard how it was said, You will love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike
(Mt 5, 39-45).

Contemplating the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Church sees a creature who responds perfectly to the will of the Creator, the perfect creature, the Mother of the Son. Everything about Mary speaks of Jesus: the Mother's every thought, word and deed reveal the Son. Marian Shrines, like Lourdes for example, are impregnated with the Spirit of Jesus, his Eucharistic Presence and his Sacramental forgiveness. Where the Mother is, there is the Son and vice versa. As Pope Benedict XVI said at the Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, Germany in 2006 “Mary and Jesus go

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together. Through Mary we want to continue our converse with the Lord and to learn how to receive him better. Holy Mother of God, pray for us, just as at Cana you prayed for the bride and the bridegroom! Guide us towards Jesus - ever anew! Amen!" (Benedict XVI, Homily 11 September 2006). (Agenzia Fides 9/7/2008)

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