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VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Mgr. Luciano Alimandi - An undivided heart for God

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - The Lord Jesus came on earth to reveal the will of God for each one of us: the path of holiness, that is, profound communion with Him and through Him with the Father, in the love of the Holy Spirit. The Saints are men and women who followed Him, fulfilling his Will. No one on the whole earth is excluded from walking this path, because God's call to holiness is universal: it reaches and embraces all mankind. To be holy as God wishes us to be, we must know Jesus, since He alone is our way to perfection. He is " the Way", to reach the "Truth", in order to have "Life" (cfr. Jn 14, 6).
The Lord Jesus came on earth, and He remains with us to tell us about the Father and lead us to Him. He founded His Church, His Mystical Body, to continue His work of salvation always and everywhere. He instituted the ministerial priesthood in order to give Himself to those who believe in Him, as the Bread of eternal life, in the Holy Eucharist, which is celebrated on all the altars of the world only by ordained ministers.
The sole reason for the Church therefore is Her Spouse, the Lord Jesus. It is He whom she celebrates, praises and proclaims as the only Saviour of the world... How lofty is the task of every Christian! How great is the Lord Jesus, whom Christians carry in their heart! But they experience an inner struggle, a spiritual battle between the flesh, or one's own will focused on "self", and the Spirit, in other words, God and His will. In fact "God is Spirit and those who adore him adore him in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4, 24), but this is only possible if we do as Jesus said, 'renounce self', our egoism, take up our cross and, united with Jesus, "follow Him" (cfr. Mk 8, 34).
Saint Augustine, in his book De Civitate Dei, writes that human history can take one of two directions: love for God builds the city of God (Jerusalem), love of self builds the "city of the Devil" (Babylon). "Two different loves build two different cities: earthly love of self, which despises God and heavenly love of God, which despises self ".
Therefore the path to perfection is to follow Jesus, to be united with Him as the spouse becomes united with his bride in the nuptial sacrament, promising to be faithful always and with an undivided heart. The great Doctors of the Church, such as Saint Teresa of Jesus, stressed again and again the absolute necessity, for following Jesus, of an undivided heart, a life which is not dual, but open to God and which follows one direction, that of holiness. Only by making a firm decision to love God and to lead a sacramental life of prayer, can we walk in the Spirit, free of the slavery of human passions.
This was underlined many times by the Apostle of the nations, as in this passage from the Letter to the Galatians: "when you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law… the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control; no law can touch such things as these. All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires. Since we are living by the Spirit, let our behaviour be guided by the Spirit" (Gal 5, 18…).
We can deceive ourselves and others about the intentions of our heart, but not God: He sees everything, knows everything. So the person who longs for God must realise that to belong entirely to Him there is only one way, the way indicated by Jesus: "Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." (Mk 8, 35).
This process of losing self, that is our selfish will, so easily misled by pride, vanity, hypocrisy..., is called "conversion"; which is not an end in itself, not losing oneself for the sake of it, instead it is "conversion to God", in order to receive Him, to receive His very life!
On this path the Blessed Virgin Mary has been given to us as Mother, to defend us from the many temptations and teach us how to lose ourselves in God, as she did time and time again, seeking not self, but Him alone! Consecrating ourselves every day to her Immaculate Heart, we humbly ask her to draw us to her, so that, living in the spiritual air irradiated by her maternal presence, we may keep our heart pure and undivided. (Agenzia Fides

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