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VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Mgr. Luciano Alimandi - Give to God what belongs to God

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - “Give to God what belongs to God” (Mk 12, 17). When the Lord says “ Give to God what belongs to God ”, He is making no little request! In fact it is only in “giving that we receive” and this is true first and foremost in our fundamental relationship with God: in order to give his whole Self to man, God asks man to entrust into His hands his whole self! How often the Sacred Liturgy we celebrate leads our hearts and minds to implore this “admirable exchange”: we offer God our poverty so He may give us his richness!
To God belongs not only part of us, but our whole being. Reflecting deeply on human life, which is only possible in the light of faith in God the Father, we come to realise that all life belongs to the Lord of Life.
Looking at life we cannot imagine that only part of it belongs to the Lord, as if as a child it were logical to entrust oneself to the Lord, but as adults we feel “capable” of living a certain degree of 'autonomy' from God.
Not rarely people think and live this way, but does this life, the breath of life which flows through each of us, from the first to the last moment of life on earth, not come to us from the Giver of Life, and is it not He who keeps us in existence? “You turn your face away, they suffer, you stop their breath, they die and revert to dust. You give breath, fresh life begins, you keep renewing the face of the earth ” (Ps 103, 29-30).
Life, all life, human and supernatural, is a profound mystery, since it flows directly from God, the Source of life: “with you is the fountain of life, by your light we see the light” (Ps 35,10).
However besides life God gave us also freedom, and so man, is totally free to give or not give to God what belongs to Him. Conquering his selfishness, retiring into his soul, man comes to realise that without God he is nothing, that life has meaning only if it is lived in Him.
A true believer will always repeat with St Paul: “what do you have that was not given to you? And if it was given, how can you boast as though it were not?” (1Cor 4, 7). These words are true first of all for human life! From God we receive the ability to think and to will, to desire and to love, to imagine and plan … these marvellous talents are not our own “making”, nor are they “fruits of chance ”, instead He gave them to us! Jesus says clearly: “give to God what belongs to Him”! Do not keep what is not yours, rather offer it to the One who gave it to you!
In the parable of the ten talents (Mt 25, 14-30), Jesus urges his disciples to keep watch in this life, and to make talents received from the “Master” bear fruit. If life is to reach its heavenly destiny, these talents must return to the hands of the One who gives them! “Know that He the Lord is God; he made us and we belong to Him, we are His people, the flock that He pastures”! (Ps 99, 3) To keep watch and to pray is of absolute importance for remaining in the truth, for recognising all that God gives us, all that Divine Providence entrusts to us here on earth.
Saint Teresa of Avila in her brilliant work, The Interior Castle, writes that t “the door of the castle”, the soul, “is prayer”: “Remember we must get to heaven and it would be madness to think that we could do so without sometimes retiring into our souls so as to know ourselves, or thinking of our failings and of what we owe to God, and frequently imploring His mercy” (Interior Castle, second mansion, n. 11).
This is why it is necessary, as Jesus says, to “pray continually ” (Lk 18, 1), knowing that God is our Father, “when you pray say: Father…” (Lk 11, 2) , that means acknowledging the fundamental truth of our human existence: God is my Father, because he gives me Everything in His Son Jesus, who came and who comes through the working of the Holy Spirit, by means of Mary!
Let us open wide to Christ the doors of our heart, of our whole life, as the invincible Servant of God John Paul II said for the first time, thirty years ago today on 22 October 1978: “ Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilisation and development. Do not be afraid. Christ knows "what is in man". He alone knows it!”
(Agenzia Fides 22/10/2008)

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