



VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Mgr. Luciano Alimandi - The One awaited by the nations!

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Advent, the season of waiting for the Lord who comes, and will not delay, has just begun! This special time of waiting is offered to the whole of humanity, because Jesus is the Saviour of every human person. However we are free to decide whether or not to seek the divine origin of Eternal Love, our Creator.

In actual fact, as human creatures, who come from God we carry in our hearts a longing for Him, veiled by an ineffable desire for Happiness, because God-Love is the supreme Beatitude. However original sin, confused and disoriented the first man and woman, deviating their and our existential "track" which, before that tremendous fall of our first parents, pointed "naturally" towards God, but then it "exited" from the celestial orbit. Since our nature was wounded by sin, we are no longer naturally drawn to the things of Heaven, we are not immediately aware of our longing for God, we "stray" as if lost, in a world which is foreign to us, seeking in it the source of happiness. But neither the things of this earth, nor human creatures, nor our self-oriented 'I', can ever satisfy our longing. God alone can fill this existential void, coming to visit the desert of our solitude!

Despite human failings, however, the longing for great things remains indelibly inscribed on every heart, created by God in His own image and likeness which nothing can ever erase. The coming of the Redeemer, in the fullness of time, the Advent of Christ two thousand years ago, gave us once again true light and certain hope, if we have faith in the One who illuminates the sublime vocation of every man and woman: holiness! The fulfilment in Him of our deepest desires.

Therefore sincere conversion is simply "returning" to the heart of the Father, guided by the love of the Son, and savouring in the Spirit, true and unending life.

From the first Advent of Jesus "we have, all of us, received - one gift replacing another," (Jn 1, 16) the answer to the deepest longings of our heart, to our aching nostalgia for boundless freedom. In other words, beatitude is no longer out of reach, it has come down to us for ever with the Incarnation of the Son of God in the pure womb of the one and only spotless creature: the Blessed Virgin Mary!

In Immaculate Mary, Advent is fulfilled in a supreme way, indeed it is thanks to Mary that the coming of Jesus was possible. At her words "behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word" (Lk 1, 38) the heavens open, the waiting of the nations is over, the One we all await so expectantly, Our Lord Jesus, comes.

Certainly Isaiah never imagined to what extent his prophecy, "behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, God with us" (Is 7,14) and his supplication, "Distil, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, that it may bring forth salvation" (Is 45,8) would be fulfilled.

At the beginning of the Season of Advent, the light of Immaculate Mary shines in all its splendour, caressing us with her tenderness and her warmth, opening our hearts to the mystery of Jesus, thanks to her, the rising Sun: "the most noble of all the Angels was sent from Heaven

to say 'Hail' to the Mother of God.

At his bodiless greeting

seeing You Lord made man in Her,

in ecstasy,

the Angel acclaimed Mary thus:

Hail, through you, new joy shines ;

Hail, through you, pain is stilled.

Hail, salvation of the fallen Adam;

Hail, ransom of Eve's tears.
Hail, sublime pinnacle of human intellect;
Hail, profound abyss in the eyes of the Angels.
Hail, in you the King's throne was up lifted;
Hail, bearer of the One who holds all.
Hail, Star who precedes the Sun;
Hail, womb of God made flesh.
Hail, through you, creation is made new;
Hail, through you, the Creator is a child.
Hail, Bride unwedded!
(From the 5th century liturgical hymn Akathistos).
(Agenzia Fides 3/12/2008)