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VATICAN - AVE MARIA, Rev Luciano Alimandi -"Mary, New Eve: the path to happiness"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Let us reflect together on the first chapters of the Book of Genesis: Gen. 3, 1-13 tells of the fall of our first parents, original sin which caused Adam and Eve to fall from heights of grace into the abyss of misery. The tempter approached Eve and led her to sin, seducing her with promises of happiness and independence, convincing her that she would be autonomous from God, if not completely as least partly. What an illusion! Eve believed in the existence of places of happiness outside the Holy Law of God and condemned herself: instead of joy she drank woe and unhappiness, becoming for consenting Adam, an ally of unhappiness, finding herself with him with neither grace nor freedom.

This is the vortex of sin: first it grasps the mind, enticing it with promises of freedom, then it poisons the will pushing it to disobedience to God, forgetting that He alone can satisfy the human heart. The astute strategy of the ancient serpent continues even in our day: the serpent is the same, and so is his word: "eat the forbidden fruit"!

The 'old' man who lives within us is wounded by the same sickness called concupiscence. This develops with the malice of pride, which claims to do without God, standing up to judge morality in the illusion that evil, all told, does not hurt and can be controlled; and the illusion becomes prouder: believing one is free when one is a slave of sin which one refuses to avoid, of the forbidden fruit which one refuses to renounce. For everyone there is a "forbidden fruit", a "recurrent temptation", stronger and more seductive than the others, which chases us with promises of fulfilment.

In actual fact only the New Adam, Christ, conquers the old Adam unmasking the illusion; but this spiritual battle is lifelong because the 'voice' of the tempter is astute and continues to whisper, with apparent affability, promises of happiness!

How often man is seduced by this false voice! Even knowing it cannot satisfy, he continues to search for this corruptible food although he has found it bitter a thousands times: remorse on awakening after sin (St. Augustine).

St. Augustine writes - "Within me I had a dearth of that inner food which is thyself, my God -- although that dearth caused me no hunger. And I remained without any appetite for incorruptible food -- not because I was already filled with it, but because the emptier I became the more I loathed it. Because of this my soul was unhealthy; and, full of sores, it exuded itself forth, itching to be scratched by scraping on the things of the senses" (Confessions, 3.1).

How often this greed takes possession of the heart, sucking out all its energies for good; of no avail are the groans of the spirit when the will refuses to open to the Grace of the new Adam: Christ is given to us by the new Eve, Mary. They alone can free man from the prison he has built for himself and to which he has thrown away the key. Only the grace of Jesus' redemption, which Mary obtained for us, can find the key: only the Truth can free our freedom.

When all seemed lost for Adam and Eve and the whole human race, God made a promise which cannot be cancelled, a wonderful announcement: "I will place enmity between you and the woman". The enmity, declared and sealed by God himself, saves us and protects us from the tempter and his seduction, it lifts us up above the vortex of sin from which nothing escapes and saves us. St Louis Grignion de Montfort writes a memorable page on the only enmity established by God, of the invincible power he gave to Mary, the new Eve: "since the earthly paradise - although she was still only in His mind - God gave her such hatred against the cursed enemy, a hatred able to unmask the malice of the ancient serpent, the power to conquer, defeat and crush that proud profaner …" (TVD, n. 52).

At the foot of the Cross, like at the Wedding Feast at Cana, Christ reveals his power thanks to His Mother who can do everything, calling her Woman: "Woman behold your son" (Jn 19, 26). The Woman, foretold in the earthly

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paradise, is here with us now, Mary is beside us and wishes to render us happy and filled with God! (Agenzia Fides 25/10/2006 - righe 49, parole 725)

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