



VATICAN - AVE MARIA "Mary: Mother, custodian of our hearts", Rev Luciano Alimandi

Vatican City (Fides Service) - The civil year opens with greetings and all the rest, overlooking the fact that the Church calls the whole world to look towards an horizon which will one day be eternal. From this horizon there arises Mary, the Mother of God who illuminates the time and space of the path of the Christians as we tend with difficulty to become one with Christ: holiness incarnate.

The dogma of the Theotokos, recalled on the solemnity of 1 January, defines for us precisely this central truth of our faith: Christ is God the Son, and He is the Son of Mary in virtue of His human generation. Countless are the expressions of wonder, admiration and praise ... in every century and everywhere which have surrounded and illustrated, sung and represented with truth of the faith of the divine maternity of Mary, enamouring numerous hosts of Christians.

Today are we too in love with this reality of eternal life? Does it have a concrete effect on our life as Christians? The truths of faith must always have an impact on the life of the believer otherwise Christianity would be merely a philosophy, a lofty idea, a conviction, deeply rooted but unable to eternalise life. Christianity is truth incarnate because its Truth is Christ, God the Son who took flesh from the Virgin Mary by the working of the Holy Spirit. The Word became one of us that we might become like Him. This is why when we say "faith", in the Christian religion we mean "transforming union": believing in Christ we are assimilated by Him, we are changed. Like St Paul, we too are prompted by the Holy Spirit to say "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2, 20).

Due to the very dynamic of Christian faith it is impossible to remain "untouched" by the truths of faith, as if they could concern only our intellect but not our life; dogmas, to be truly believed, must become "flesh of our flesh", and then we will be disciples of Jesus.

The task of the Mother of God is to make the truths of the Gospel become incarnate in us; just as through Her Christ came into the world so too through her Christ comes in us, he is incarnated in us, as it is so well expressed in the doctrine of Louis Grignion de Montfort. Benedict XVI used the powerful expression of "spiritual incarnation" to describe God's plan that every Christian should open to the intermediate coming of Christ. During First Vespers of the first Sunday of Advent referring to what Saint Bernard Doctor of the Church wrote about the "intermediate coming of Christ" the Pope said: "The archetype for that coming of Christ, which we might call a "spiritual incarnation", is always Mary. Just as the Virgin Mother pondered in her heart on the Word made flesh, so every individual soul and the entire Church are called during their earthly pilgrimage to wait for Christ who comes and to welcome him with faith and love ever new." (Benedict XVI, 2 December 2006).

Many mystics have spoken of the exceptional grace of the spiritual incarnation as, such as for example, venerable Concepción Cabrera de Armida (1862 - 1937), a Mexican mystic, first bride, then mother, then widow and then founder of two religious orders; she spoke of the grace of "mystical incarnation" which the Lord wishes to give every true disciple, beginning with his priests. Like Montfort, venerable Concepción underlined that Mary has a unique role to render this union possible. If we love and imitate her sincerely, Mary will not fail to lead us to this transforming union with Jesus, which is, in other words, true holiness of life, the deepest nature of Christianity: "But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God: to those who believed in his name who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself"! (Jn 1, 12-13) (Agenzia Fides 3/1/2007 Righe: 44 Parole: 684)