

New Brighton, Sunday 22nd May 2022

5th Sunday after Easter

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Dear Brethren,

Four more days, and our lord will leave us to prepare a place for us in His heavenly home. Four more days to stay with him. Next Sunday will start the long series of the Sundays which figures the History of the world until the last judgment, of which we will hear as a prophecy at the last Sunday after Pentecost.

This though should fill our hearts with a kind of sadness, the same which filled the heart of the apostles when Jesus said to them: “a little while and you shall not see me, and a little while and you shall see me again”¹, word we heard last Sunday.

As you can hear, our Holy Mother the Church prepares us for the long journey back home, for our life on Earth. These Sundays after Easter are giving us a push to strengthen our spiritual life, to help us to face all kind of troubles we might encounter on our way back.

The Lord will go, yes. But He doesn't leave us alone. He remains with His invisible presence, next to us, ready to assist us in danger. And today we hear, with veiled words, the same promise he will make us on the Day of the Ascension; “I am with you until the end of the world.”² These words echo His promise in today's gospel: “If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it to you [...] Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.”³

This possible sadness previously mentioned is and should be replaced with this joy; confidence and complete trust that the Lord is with us, because He promised.

This joy is expressed throughout all the mass, framing the gospel with the sung mass proper, the music of the Gregorian Chant giving us unconsciously some tips to make the words of our Divine Lord easier to understand and to trust.

From the introit to the Alleluias, the Offertory and Communion Antiphons, a same feeling strongly comes out the Gregorian melodies: a peaceful and confident jot-t that our prayers will be heard and answered.

This joy could be expressed like a shout of praise to the Lord, but shouting in church is not appropriate to the sacred space of the building. The Gregorian Chant expresses and measures this shout of joy. To become liturgical, this shout of confidence must be stylised with the ornaments of the Chant, transforming what could be an order to a kind, but insistent and urgent invitation: to receive this joy and obtain peace with God.

This Introit *Vocem Jucunditatis* tells us more about the desire of the Church to expand the Kingship of Christ over the world, with His sweetness and humility of Heart.

We need first to contemplate the joy of the Resurrection to be able to live from it. The joy of being redeemed, saved, rise one day, inviting us to an eternal happiness, is making us

¹ John, XVI, 16.

² Matthew, XXVIII, 20.

³ John, XVI, 23-24.

extremely thankful towards Our Lord. And that's the purpose of the offertory antiphon. Taken from Psalm 65, the verses were written as a thanksgiving praise from a catastrophic issue, fixed and avoided by the kindness and mercy of the Lord. Even nearly forty days after His Victory against the devil and our sins, the Church invites us to say thank you for this unmerited gift and forgiveness. The same spirit can be withdrawn from the Communion Antiphon, expressing even more a joy which wishes to be communicated to everyone, like a burning furnace of Charity: the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

When Our Lord appeared to St Margaret-Mary, he offered to her adoration "the Heart that has so much loved men and instead of gratitude, received from the greater part of humanity only ingratitude".

Let's listen to the invitation of our Sacred Lord to come to Him today with a grateful attitude of thanksgiving. Let's listen to the urgent invitation of our Holy Mother the Church, throughout the melodies of the Mass, to come joyfully and peacefully to Jesus.

He said: "If you ask the father anything in my name, He will give it to you, that your joy may be full".

Who could say no, or even hesitate, facing such goodness and tenderness, despite our numerous mistakes, sins and general ingratitude.

Nobody should even think of something else: we must come to his divine Heart to answer His call. He said he will answer: why are we still waiting to ask anything, while he's there, expecting us?

If we are afraid of such a demonstration of goodness, we may turn towards our divine Mother, who will gladly present our requests to our Lord. She will not push us away. We carried her in a triumphal procession last Sunday, and she's still upon her throne of glory in this sanctuary, crowned and surrounded with the flowers of our humble homage.

Her Immaculate Heart will never let us alone, because she promised that It will triumph!

Come to Jesus!

Come to Mary!

Come and ask the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart anything you need!

Ask and you shall be answered!

"Come with confidence, trust and joy at [their] throne of majesty!"⁴

Amen.

⁴Hebrew, IV, 16.