

Birkenhead, Sunday 14th May 2023

5th Sunday after Easter

Ausculata o filiae vocem jucunditatis.¹

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

Hear o daughters, the words of joy. The joy of a unique call to salvation, to share with the Lord the glorious lot of many other saints, who preceded us on Earth, and are expecting us to join them in Heaven. These words of joy opened the mass of this 5th Sunday after Easter. Reusing the same words of the chant of the Introit, we are due to announce, this joy to the world. Not necessarily by walking from door to door but remaining faithfully at the place the Lord chose for us to stay, most of the time humbled and ignored from many.

Although we are still living in the vale of tears, we are already invited to demonstrate the joy to be called for such honour. The theological virtue of Hope was strengthened by the Resurrection of Christ we are celebrating along those forty days of Eastertide. And today Jesus renews once more this promise we heard several times, but we need to hear one more time to make stronger our resolution to follow Him faithfully till the end:

“Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full.”²

We should not be afraid to ask from Him nothing else but holiness and the joy of paradise. Jesus said “any thing”. “Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace,”³ to humbly and faithfully request a small part in his kingdom. Following the words of the Little Flower, we may say with her:

“After exile on earth, I hope to enjoy the possession of Thee in our eternal Fatherland, but I have no wish to amass merits for Heaven, I will work for Thy Love alone, my sole aim being to give Thee pleasure, to console Thy Sacred Heart, and to save souls who will love Thee forever.

At the close of life’s evening, I shall appear before Thee with empty hands, for I ask not, Lord, that Thou wouldst count my works... All our justice is tarnished in Thy sight. It is therefore my desire to be clothed with Thine own Justice and to receive from Thy Love the eternal possession of Thyself. I crave no other Throne, not other Crown but thee, O my beloved!”⁴

This thought of heaven should be enough to nourish our spiritual life all along. Knowing that the Lord loved and loves us, despite our multiple actions, words, thoughts and

¹ St Benedict, Rule, prologue. Prov. I, 8 & Isa, XLVIII, 20, 5th Sunday after Easter, Introit.

² Jn, XVI, 23-24. 5th Sunday after Easter, Gospel.

³ Hb, IV, 16.

⁴ St Therese of the Child Jesus, Story of a soul, XII.

deeds of infidelity, it should comfort us in a true attitude of sorrow for these, but mixed with unending joy and holy hope because of this promise He made to us.

We are still suffering, “but [our] sorrow shall be turned into joy,”⁵ as we heard only two weeks ago for the Gospel of the 3rd Sunday after Easter. One of the main things that will convert that sorrow is the promise we just heard.

“[The] Divine Son, my Beloved Spouse, told us in the says of His mortal life: “Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name he will give it to you!” I am certain, then, that Thou wilt grant my desires; I know, O my God! that the more Thou wilt to give, the more Thou makest us desire. I feel in my heart immense desires and it is with confidence I ask Thou to come and take possession of my soul. Ah! I cannot receive Holy Communion as often as I desire, but, Lord, are Thou not all-powerful? Remain in me as in a tabernacle and never separate Thyself from Thy little victim.”⁶

This confident hope and desire of holiness can’t remain as just a desire, but, following the words of St James in the epistle, “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”⁷ Do not remain like the foolish virgins of the Gospel, who arrived late at the door, crying: Lord, Lord!⁸ Beware that the Lord might come like a thief,⁹ as He Himself warned us several times. We know not the time, nor the hour.

The confidence in His merciful grace can’t mean we are staying in a quiet place, just waiting for Him to come, and doing nothing else. He created a place for us to put ourselves to trial, and for us to show evidence of our love for Him. This vale of tears is the place to earn our place in Heaven. A place we should conquer with the joy of being united to the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer, assisted by his Holy Grace, and assured by a divine Hope He will grant us anything we ask.

“O My God! Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to Love Thee and make Thee Loved, to work for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls on earth and liberating those suffering in purgatory. I desire to accomplish Thy will perfectly and to reach the degree of glory Thou have prepared for me in Thy Kingdom. I desire, in a word, to be saint, but I feel my helplessness and I beg Thee, O my God! to be Thyself my Sanctity!”¹⁰

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

⁵ Jn, XVI, 20. 3rd Sunday after Easter, Gospel.

⁶ St Therese of the Child Jesus, Story of a soul, XII.

⁷ James, I, 22.

⁸ Mt, XXV.

⁹ Apoc, XVI, 15.

¹⁰ St Therese of the Child Jesus, Story of a soul, XII.