

New Brighton, Sunday 8th September 2024

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Commemoration of the Nativity of BVM

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

“Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted¹.”

The sentence which concludes today’s Gospel echoes, without a doubt the 7th verse of the Magnificat, that we sing every day for Vespers: “He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble².” Our Lord refers His own word to the words of His Mother whom we are also celebrating the birth today. The divine inspiration gave Her the words to glorify the Lord and to give Him back all the blessings she was ornated with. Through the coincidence of today’s Gospel and the Nativity of Our Lady, we see clearly the way that the Lord is indicating: the devotion to our Blessed Mother in Heaven, and the imitation of her numerous virtues and especially the one of Humility.

“Let us rejoice, then, with our infant [the little Mary], who was born so holy, so dear to God, and so full of grace; and let us rejoice not only for her, but also for ourselves, since she came into the world full of grace, not only for her own glory, but for our good. St. Thomas says the most holy Virgin was full of grace in three ways:

- 1st, She was full of grace in soul, so that from the beginning her holy soul belonged entirely to God.
- 2nd, She was full of grace in body, so that she merited to clothe the eternal Word with her pure flesh.
- 3rd, She was full of grace for the common benefit, so that all men might share it. Some saints, adds the angelic Doctor, have so much grace, that not only is it enough for themselves but also to save many others, not, how ever, all men; only to Jesus Christ and Mary was given so great a grace that it was sufficient to save all men. [...]

From Jesus, however (we should understand), we receive grace as from the author of grace, from Mary as the mediatrix; from Jesus as the Saviour, from Mary as the advocate: from Jesus as the fountain, from Mary as the channel. Therefore St. Bernard says that God has established Mary as the channel of the mercies which He wishes to dispense to men; and for this reason He filled her

¹ Lk., 14, 11.

² Lk., 1, 52.

with grace, that every one might receive his portion of her fullness. A full channel, that all might partake of its fullness, but not receive the fullness itself. Hence the saint exhorts all to consider with how much love God will have us honor this great Virgin, since in her he has placed all the treasure of his blessings; that whatever we possess of hope, grace, and salvation, we may thank our most loving queen for it; since it all comes to us through her hands, and by her intercession³.”

The long excerpt from the *Glories of Mary* that we just read together, is inviting us to contemplate in a very special way the blessings of Our heavenly Mother. She is now the dispenser of all the graces of Her Son, and none of the graces she asks Him on our behalf would be denied, providing they are the good thing for us at the moment of our request. Out of love for her children of Earth, she would even prevent their demands, and ask in anticipation what we need for our salvation.

Let's not waste such an opportunity to ask Our Lady on her anniversary day what we do need. "Make a wish", are we saying to a child blowing the little candles over his anniversary cake. We should respectfully say the same to Our Mother, and her wish would be surely for all of us to become saints in her company.

The door of heaven is very small, and only humbles who imitate the virtue of Our Lady will be allowed to pass through. Accept the humiliation of this earth to gain your place in heaven. Do not search for human recognition of your actions, fearing that the Lord, on that day, would say to you: you already received your reward, go away, I do not have anything left for you.

“From the desire of being honoured, From the desire of being praised,
From the desire of being preferred to others, Deliver me, O Jesus & Mary.

From the fear of being humiliated, From the fear of being forgotten,
Deliver me, O Jesus & Mary.

That others may be esteemed more than I, That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, That others may be chosen and I set aside, That others may be praised and I go unnoticed, Jesus & Mary, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, Jesus & Mary, grant me the grace to desire it⁴.”

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

³ St. Alphonsus, *The Glories of Mary*, 2nd Discourse.

⁴ Experts from: Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val, *Litany of Humility*.