SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 211104b

Thursday 04.11.2021

Holy Mass for the repose of the Cardinals and Bishops deceased during the course of the year

At 11.00 this morning, at the Altar of the Cathedra of the Vatican Basilica, the Holy Father Francis presided at Holy Mass for the eternal repose of the Cardinals and bishops deceased during the course of the year.

The following is the homily delivered by the Holy Father after the proclamation of the Gospel:

Homily of the Holy Father

In the first Reading we heard this invitation: “It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (*Lam* 3: 26). This attitude is not a starting point, but rather a destination. Indeed, the author reaches it at the end of a journey, a troubled journey, that enabled him to grow. He arrives at the comprehension of the beauty of trusting in the Lord, who never fails to keep his promises. But trust in God is not born of a momentary enthusiasm; it is not an emotion, nor is it a sentiment. On the contrary, it comes from experience and matures in patience, as in the case of Job, who passes from a knowledge of God “by hearsay” to a living, experiential knowledge. And for this to happen, it takes a long inner transformation that, through the crucible of suffering, leads to knowing how to wait in silence, that is, with confident patience, with a meek soul. This patience is not resignation, because it is nurtured by the expectation of the Lord, whose coming is sure and does not disappoint.

Dear brothers and sisters, how important it is to learn *the art of waiting for the Lord*! To wait for him meekly, confidently, chasing away phantoms, fanaticism and clamour; preserving, especially in times of trial, a silence filled with hope. This is how we prepare for life’s last and greatest trial, death. But first there are the trials of the moment, there is the cross we have now, and for which we ask the Lord for the grace to know how to wait there, right there, for his coming salvation.

Each one of us needs to mature in this. In the face of life's difficulties and problems, it is difficult to have patience and remain calm. Irritation ensues and often despondency sets in. Thus, it can happen that we are strongly tempted by pessimism and resignation, we see everything as black, and we become accustomed to tones of defiance and lament, similar to those of the sacred author who says at the beginning: “Gone is my glory, and my

expectation from the Lord" (v. 18). In adversity, not even the beautiful memories of the past can console us, because affliction leads the mind to dwell on difficult moments. And this increases bitterness; it seems that life is a continuous chain of misfortunes, as the author admits: "[I] remember my affliction and my bitterness, the wormwood and the gall" (v. 19).

At this point, however, the Lord makes a turning point, at the very moment when, while continuing to dialogue with Him, it seems as if we are at rock bottom. In the abyss, in the anguish of nonmeaning, God draws near to save us. And when bitterness reaches its climax, hope suddenly flourishes again. It is a bad thing to reach old age with a bitter heart, with a disappointed heart, with a heart critical of new things, it is very hard. "But this I call to mind", says the praying man in the Book of Lamentations, "and therefore I have hope". Resuming hope in the moment of bitterness. In the midst of sorrow, those who cling to the Lord see that he unlocks suffering, opens it, transforms it into a door through which hope enters. It is a paschal experience, a painful passage that opens to life, a kind of spiritual labour that in the darkness makes us come to the light again.

This turnaround is not because the problems have disappeared, no, but because crisis has become a mysterious opportunity for inner purification. Prosperity, in fact, often makes us blind, superficial, proud. This is the road to which prosperity leads us. On the other hand, the passage through adversity, if lived in the warmth of faith, despite its hardness and tears, allows us to be reborn, and we find ourselves different from the past. A Church father wrote that "nothing, more than suffering, leads to the discovery of new things" (Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Ep. 34). Adversity renews us, because it removes many of the waste and teaches us to look beyond, beyond the darkness, to touch with our own hands that the Lord really does save and that He has the power to transform everything, even death. He lets us pass through bottlenecks not to abandon us, but to *accompany* us. Yes, because *God accompanies* us, especially in pain, like a father who helps his son to grow up well by being close to him in difficulties without taking his place. And before the tears appear on our faces, the emotion has already reddened the eyes of God the Father. He weeps first, I would say. Grief remains a mystery, but in this mystery, we can discover in a new way the paternity of God who visits us in our difficulties, and come to say, with the author of Lamentations: "The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him" (v. 25).

Today, before the mystery of redeemed death, we ask for the grace to look at adversity with different eyes. We ask for the strength to know how to live in the meek and trusting *silence* that awaits the salvation of the Lord, without complaining, without grumbling, without allowing ourselves to be saddened. What seems like a punishment will turn out to be a grace, a new demonstration of God's love for us. Knowing how to wait in *silence* - without chattering, in silence - for the salvation of the Lord is an art, on the road to holiness. Let us cultivate it. It is valuable in the time in which we are living: now more than ever there is no need to shout, to stir up clamour, to become bitter; what is needed is for each of us to bear witness with our lives to our faith, which is a docile and hopeful expectation. Faith is this: docile and hopeful expectation. Christians do not diminish the seriousness of suffering, no, but they raise their eyes to the Lord and under the blows of adversity they trust in Him and pray: they pray for those who suffer. He keeps his eyes on Heaven, but his hands are always extended to earth, to serve his neighbour concretely. Even in times of sadness, of darkness: service.

In this spirit, we pray for the Cardinals and Bishops who have left us in the past year. Some of them died as a result of Covid-19, in difficult situations that compounded their suffering. May these brothers of ours now savour the joy of the Gospel invitation that the Lord addresses to his faithful servants: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (*Mt* 25:34).