



March 14, 2015 Meditation

Here I am! Forever

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin...and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you...Behold you will conceive, bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus...Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: May it be done to me according to your word..." (Lk 1: 26-38)

This page of the Gospel presents to us the call and the mission of Mary. The angel is sent from God to Mary to have her know the plan that God has for her and to ask for her consent. God has for each of us a plan of love and cannot realize it without us. He seeks our free adhesion.

"And coming to her, said: Rejoice, beloved of God!" The first word that God says to Mary and each of us is: Be happy! Rejoice! The first word of the Gospel is a word of joy. Before calling to a mission, God invites to joy: "Rejoice, be happy!" When God enters into our life, he doesn't enter to ask, but to give. He comes to tell each one of us: open yourself to joy. God leans over us and places in his hands and ours the promise of happiness.

"The Lord is with you." Something unheard of, unthinkable, happens with Mary. In her, enters that God, who since forever has been the God of Abraham, Isaac, of Jacob. The God of the Fathers. A God of whom others have personally experienced, now is God with us.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Mary calls herself "servant". To serve is a new way of living. No longer turned inward, closed; but open towards God. The logic of possession is replaced by the logic of giving. Mary is "glued" to God, totally adherent to Him.

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord,": words pronounced without reserve. Mary enters the plan of salvation with sentiments of total availability.

"May it be done to me according to your word." May it be done us a form of Greek meaning: I do not wish other than to do with joy the will of God. The verb, therefore, indicates an intense desire. Mary pronounces a yes with all her heart.

"May it be done to me": At the school of the Mother of the Lord, these words are lived by Father Kolbe to the offering of his life. In only 12 years (1927-1939) the community he created becomes a maxi convent of more than 700 friars, so much as to fear a new Order in the Order. Without loud, verbal campaigns, Father Kolbe exhorted: "Come to work for the Immaculata!" He showed the beauty and urgency of being missionaries. "I live only for souls: this is my mission," he wrote in 1933 from the Italian ship "Conte Rosso." He referred to the conversion of the powerful Japanese minister Kawai.1

Like Mary, even Father Kolbe's yes has the mark of fidelity. A yes without "yes, but". Up to the end. Up to the gift of love.

Is it possible to love forever? Today, people are afraid to make firm choices, whether preparing for marriage, the priesthood or the consecrated life. It's a general fear in our culture. Making choices for all of our lives seems impossible. Today everything changes rapidly; nothing lasts a long time. The everlasting love, as an example, built as a house, not on the sands of feelings that come and go. But on the rock of true love, the love that comes from God.² As God's love is stable and forever, so can our love be stable and forever. The secret is being "glued" to God like Mary and Father Kolbe.

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