

## MAKE THE RIGHTEOUS SECURE

March 2019



### Conforming to God's plan

Saint Matthew the Evangelist uses one significant word to describe Saint Joseph the spouse of Mary: "**Righteous**". (*Mt. 1, 19*)

In the Bible, righteous is he who knows how to place himself before God in truth; he who comprehends and lives the Testament; he who conforms to God's plan and to the way He acts.

This is why Joseph is able to receive and obey to the angel's message in his dream to "take Mary, his wife, into his home" for she is carrying in her womb the Son of God, then to escape with his family into Egypt in order to save Jesus from Herod's wrath, later to return to Palestine, but to settle in Galilea and not in Bethlehem (*Mt. ch.2*).

The readiness and receptivity of Saint Joseph played a most important and definitive role in unfolding God's plan" for our salvation!

Conformity with God's willed order characterizes the righteous man / woman.

Man's justice is built upon God's justice.

"God is just in all His works" sings the Psalmist, and His justice comforts, gives life and offers hope.

"The righteous will rejoice in the Lord" (*Psalms 64, 11*).

**The Church continues the work and mission of the Incarnate Word** into the world; she gives us life in the Spirit, strengthens and heals us, guides and illuminates us and, in short, disposes all the means for our reconciliation with God and one-another.

For, the Church alone possesses all the treasures of Christ!

### The one who does what is right is righteous

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

But you know that Christ came into the world so that he might take away our sins. And in him there is no sin.

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous.

(1 John 3, 1-7 excerpts)

## God wants us to live well



In his description of hell, Dante Alighieri pictures the devil seated on a throne of ice, in frozen and loveless isolation. We might well ask ourselves how it happens that charity can turn cold within us. What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool?

More than anything else, what destroys charity is greed for money, "the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10).

The rejection of God and his peace soon follows; we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments. All this leads to violence against anyone we think is a threat to our own "certainties": the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbour who does not live up to our expectations.

Creation itself becomes a silent witness to this cooling of charity. The earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. The seas, themselves polluted, engulf the remains of countless shipwrecked victims of forced migration. The heavens, which in God's plan, were created to sing His praises, are rent by engines raining down implements of death...

...But the Church, our Mother and Teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

By devoting more time to *prayer*, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

(Pope Francis, 2018)

## Did you know...

The Biblical message of **righteousness** has many aspects:

- ◆ Depending on God's judgment, in the course of history, *man has to "do justice"*.
- ◆ This duty of "doing justice" becomes all the more internalized so that it ends up in *worshipping "in Spirit and in Truth"*.
- ◆ Within the scope of the plan of salvation, man realizes that he cannot possess this righteousness through his own works, but *he must receive it as a gift of grace*.
- ◆ Finally, God's righteousness cannot be considered only as the exercise of judgment, but –above all, as *merciful faithfulness to the divine plan of salvation*.

It is this righteousness which creates within us the justice that God requires of us.

## The flame became a fire

God is always present in history prompting us all, collectively and personally, to get to know Him so that we love and serve Him.

His call is always an offering of life and hope.

Salvation is taking place in a “hidden” and humble way. The Son of God gets incarnate in the pure womb of a young girl of fifteen, the Virgin Mary.

He is born in a stable in the little town of Bethlehem, grows up in Nazareth in the province of Galilea, travels throughout Palestine as well as in parts of Syria and Lebanon preaching the Good News of the arrival of the kingdom of God and suffers His Passion in, occupied by the Romans, Jerusalem.

The Resurrection happens away from any eye witnesses, yet the spark became a flame and the flame became a fire, which has spread throughout the whole world!

The Church possesses that flame of divine love and she spreads the Spirit’s fire!

The fire purges, the Spirit sanctifies and thus in the simplicity of the hearts and without noise happens the great miracle of man’s divinization!

*“Let it become to me according to thy word!” (Lk. 1, 38)*

## The Virgin at Noon



*It is noon. I see the church open. I must enter.  
Mother of Jesus Christ, I have not come to pray.  
I have nothing to offer and nothing to ask.  
I have come only, Mary, to gaze upon you.  
To gaze upon you, to weep with joy, to know this –  
That I am your son and that you are here.  
Only for that moment when everything stops.  
Noon!  
To be with you, Mary, in this place where you rest,  
Saying nothing, looking at your face,  
Letting my heart sing its own language.  
Saying nothing, yet still singing because my heart is too full,  
Like the blackbird who pursues an idea  
in this kind of sudden couplets.  
For you are beautiful, for you are immaculate,  
Woman finally restored to Grace,*

*Creature in her first honor and in her final flourishing,  
Just as she emerged from God  
on the morning of her original splendor.  
Ineffably intact because you are the Mother of Jesus Christ,  
Who is truth in your arms, and our sole hope and sole fruit.  
Because you are woman, Eden of ancient tenderness forgotten,  
Whose gaze finds my heart all of a sudden,  
and makes collected tears spring forth, [...]  
Because it is noon, because we are here today,  
Because you are there forever, simply because you are Mary,  
simply because you exist.  
Mother of our Lord, be thanked!*

*Paul Claudel, 1868-1955, La Vierge à Midi, translation provided by Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Mill Valley California*

## **Pascha**

“...the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us **recover the vision and the taste of that new life** which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. ...

It is through her liturgical life that the Church reveals to us something of that which “the ear has not heard, the eye has not seen, and what has not yet entered the heart of man, but which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

And in the center of that liturgical life, as its heart and climax, as the sun whose rays penetrate everywhere, stands Pascha.”

— *Alexander Schmemmann, [Great Lent: Journey to Pascha](#)*