30/05/2022

Elder Iosif Vatopaidinos – The aim and purpose of life



The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth' (Jn. 1, 14). 'In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered' (Heb. 2, 10).

Because the image had fallen and was broken in pieces, the only person who could intervene and renew it was none other than he who first made it: 'For he spoke and it came to be; he commanded and it stood firm'. (Ps. 32, 9). 'But when the set time had fully come', the time for the accomplishment of divine plan for our salvation through the divine will, 'God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption as his children' (Gal. 4, 4-5).

On the day when we celebrate God's plan for the salvation of the world, Christmas, God visited his people and 'the Word became flesh'. Better tidings had never been heard in human history anywhere in the world. The eternal message, in heaven, on

earth, and even below the earth is simply that: ‘the Word became human’. In a creation which was subject to death and decay, what else, or rather who else could be expected to restore balance, other than the first architect? The whole of creation, under the pressure of corruption cried aloud: ‘Show us your face that we may be saved’ (Ps. 79, 4); ‘Let your tender mercies come speedily to meet us, for we have been brought very low’ (Ps. 78, 8).

And when he had left the heavens, ‘the Word became human’. In these four words, the whole of the Gospel is encapsulated, the glad message to the heavens, to the earth, and to the whole of creation. Because God the Word became flesh, it means that he was united hypostatically with us humans, who, from that moment on, became people ‘of divine flesh’. The human body of the Word, in the mystical but real union with God, experiences and radiates all the divine perfections. When God the Word took on our human nature, he not only became flesh, but also soul, ‘divine soul’. But even after union, the two remain unconfused. God remains God and the soul remains the soul, the difference being that, since the soul received divine attributes through grace, it now participates in God’s joyful sacraments. By its hypostatic participation, with divine self-generation and immortality, the soul became an active member of eternal life and immortality in Christ, as well as of the other divine attributes, sharing in the divine dispensation, i.e. God’s plan for our salvation.

With his incarnation, the divine Word gave other attributes to human nature. He gave a part of his divine attributes to the whole of the psychosomatic being of humankind and, in this way, everything was transformed into ‘god-like’, as it had been before the fall. Now, indeed, those living in Christ acquired Christ-like sensibility, Christ-like conscience, Christ-like will, Christ-like memory and, in general, their whole nature was grafted onto the deified body of Christ and made Christ-like. Since God the Word is the creator of the whole of creation, he is also the foundation of the whole structure of the world. Through sin and wickedness, humankind attempts to distance God the Word, the Creator, from the foundations of the universe. The only-begotten Son and Word of God became incarnate in order to communicate with his creation and bring it back to its Creator from whom it had been cut off through trespass and the fall.

At the same time, however, he is also its first foundation. ‘The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him’ (Col. 1, 14-15). At another point, it’s said that: ‘No-one can lay any foundation other than

the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ’. (1 Cor 3, 11). Those who build on this firm and unshakeable rock of the universe are wise and their personality has acquired all the attributes of God; has been made ‘Word-like’, and will withstand the shocks of the earthquakes and uncertainties of this world.

The incarnation of God the Word demonstrates that rationality* is the essence of our nature, the foundation and basis of our being. In its archetype and in its nature, the whole of creation, material and immaterial, comes from God the Word and is for the Word. In him and through him everything returns to its rational provenance and existence. And since we have our provenance from God and through God, our life and being depend entirely on him. Isn’t this what the words of our Lord mean: ‘Without me you can do nothing’ (Jn. 15, 5).

*A deliberate use of ambiguity. In Greek, logos means ‘word’ and ‘reason’.

Source: pemptousia.com

vema.com.au