

Tuesday Reflection 12 January 2021

PSALM 8

The Responsorial Psalm in today's Mass has something of a pivotal position, in that it looks forward and looks back.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews in the First Reading reads the Psalm as a reference to Jesus Christ, influenced perhaps by the phrase 'son of man' in verse 4, which reads 'what is man that you are mindful of him,/the son of man that you care for him' (unfortunately this is not part of the Mass reading) as 'the son of man' is the phrase by which Jesus often refers to himself.

I take the second verse (as read) as referring back to the creation story in Genesis. The Psalm reads "You gave him power over the works of your hand,/ you put all things under his feet", and Genesis 1:26 reads:

Then God said, "let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground".

God making man in His image shows God's great love for us, that he entrusts at least the earthly part of Creation to our care, because, after all, one of the signs of love is the willingness to share unreservedly.

Sharing, or gifting, however imposes a responsibility on the recipient to accept the gift as a sign of the giver's generosity and love and not to take it for granted. Furthermore, the gift places on the recipient a responsibility to treat the gift with care and in this way to reciprocate the love and generosity of the giver.

Unfortunately, we are in danger of concentrating on the 'rule over' and neglecting the responsibility which God has entrusted to us. Is this the way to treat a gift?

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