



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

A meditation - COVID-19: Where is God?

Waiting for Easter



William Blake, 1793 Illustrations of the Book of Job

In this pandemic (Covid-19), which has changed our life plans and shaken our systematically and scientifically constructed certainties, which shakes the world with its dramatic scenes of the dead, of the infected, of forced isolation, of broken relationships, of working in crisis and revealed the limitations of our almost infallible algorithms, we ask ourselves: How was it possible that it got out of hand? What went wrong? What must we do or not do? How long will this last? How many will die? Fear, rancor, pain, hope are expressed; we carry out rituals, gestures of generosity; we express our needs, we continue to care, we bury, we cremate; but in all of this, where is God?

It would also seem that our prayers have no answer. Is God listening? And why is all this happening? Is it our own deficiencies that prevent us from finding an answer?

We are missing the 'keystone' that completes the artefact, the vault of the edifice, the arch of the bridge, that keystone without which everything collapses and everything is useless. Where is God? The same intimate and profound question continually returns.

Is our *mea culpa* a ritual, an act induced by uncontrollable circumstances? Is it the result or consequence of our error? The question "where is God?", is it superfluous or useless? And does God have anything to do with it or not?

Does it therefore make sense to ask ourselves: where is God? What answers do we have? Are there any? And our algorithms? Algorithms defer on this to other algorithms.

Finitude leads us to not having an answer, which, in itself, is existential. This was the case for biblical Job. Answers are for concrete questions. If this were the case, all we are left with is an answerless void.

That is unless we lift our gaze, not in search of an answer to a simple question, but to know: If there is no God or if He has no place in this crisis, is everything closed within the finitude of the passage of time? If there is God, then I recognize that I do not need an answer, but to submit.

Christ's "It is finished!" on the cross is a 'submission' ("With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." [Jn 19:30]) to the Father to whom he definitively appeals for that *mysterium vitae* that had brought him to earth as a living part of it.

This fatherhood (of God) does not exclude the limits that God himself imposed on His 'fatherhood'.

Thus the question returns to us. Not to interrogate ourselves and still look for the sense of an unreliable answer, but to have the sense of an attitude against all additional temptations: Either live as if God did not exist, or dump everything on divine punishment as a penitential part. Alternatively, all that remains is to 'submit' everything to God again, accepting that in this "time of man", today, the act of trusting submission should not be excluded: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." This is where everything finishes: "When he had said this, he breathed his last" (Lk 23, 46).

The pacification of the soul is in returning to the initial peace from which everything started: the 'nothing' or 'God'. If nothing comes out of nothing, only God remains. There is a place for God, but it is enclosed in the *mysterium vitae*.

However, the good done remains. Its credit remains unquenchable. The good belongs to us and this makes sense; but the credit, which is of a moral and spiritual order, passes into the hands of God. Good cannot be extinguished.

In the empty tomb of Christ, there is the void of our expectations, not the void of God. In silence, there is the silence of waiting for an answer, not the silence of God.

Waiting for Easter!

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

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