



WHEN YOU
SEND FORTH
YOUR SPIRIT,
THEY ARE CREATED;
AND YOU RENEW
THE FACE
OF THE GROUND

Psalms 104:30

Monthly Reflection:

October 2020

This psalm is an extraordinary treasure - a loud declaration, a miraculous proclamation and a marvellous testimony of the works of God. It is God who creates (Gen. 1:1) as well as renews (Rev. 21:5). He creates out of nothing (Gen. 1, 2) and He renews what is old (Eph. 4; 22-23). Overwhelmed by the majesty and beauty of the creation that the fingers of God wove into existence, the psalmist's heart overflows with praise and wonder. It gathers momentum with each verse and reaches its crescendo towards the end. The praise of the Creator seamlessly gives way to the deep sentiments of his personal life that is ingrained in praise and thanksgiving (Ps.104:33-35). Scripture scholars generally agree that David himself wrote this psalm as the style and essence are very similar to Ps. 103 which was penned by him.

A Jesus Youth, who longs for the presence of God like a swallow (Ps. 84:3), for the streams of the Spirit like a deer (Ps. 42:1) and the contentment of a sheep that wants nothing (Ps. 23:1), has a calling to immerse himself in the intensity of the psalmist's God experience. This call and our response to it deserves serious thought. The awareness that God, the Father created everything in unison with the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is his own hands; (C.C.C. 704), causes praise and thanksgiving to well up within our hearts like a never-ending spring.

It is interesting to keep in mind the backdrop of events that made the psalmist write such a canticle of praise whose aroma still refreshes the hearts of believers even after centuries. The dreadful fall that happened in his life had given way to a heartfelt prayer for change (Ps. 51:10). God's mercy made him a totally new creation. His life was renewed. When he was convicted of his sin, he had bewailed that his heart was utterly corrupted. With deep remorse over the corruption of his heart (Mt. 15:19) and his own inability to do the will of God, he humbly prayed for a new heart. The radiance of this prayer answered is reflected throughout this psalm.

When the Holy Spirit comes, we are incorporated into Christ. The old gives way to the new. (2 Cor. 5:17). God gives us a brand new heart that will enable us to live this new life (Ez. 11:19). Whenever we repent (Acts 2:38), accept Jesus again as our Lord (Rom 10:9), God gives us a new heart that can love him supremely. We should never pass by in ignorance of this blessed truth.

This sovereign act of God gives rise to a marvellous change in the psalmist. He sees that the whole world is renewed. History does not speak of any significant change that came across the world in David's time. Yet, the psalmist sings that 'you renew the face of the earth'. Such a song can arise only from true life experiences. It was a seemingly innocuous stroll on the terrace of his palace, gazing selfishly at the beauty of creation that led to his tragic fall. The harrowing effect of it makes the world



appear as dull and soulless to him. He never had to go up to that terrace again. When God heard his heart-rending plea for a new spirit, he was born anew. The creation appeared as marvellous and exciting to him in a new way. Everyone who partakes of such an experience can exult by looking at the creation like St. Francis of Assisi 'Laudato si, mi signore!' (Praise be to you, my Lord). When each Jesus Youth joins in this cry from his heart, his world is also renewed.

What are the areas in our lives that need to be renewed? It is our inner self (2 Cor. 4:16, Eph. 3:16, Rom. 7:22-23); especially our minds (Rom. 12:2). This renewal is essential for discerning the will of God. The young ruler who sought out Jesus with his youthful zest and adventurous spirit for new horizons and great challenges is a prime example (Christus Vivit #18). The Lord's call for a revolution of compassion and the transformation it entailed was beyond what he wanted to embrace. His riches and authority were more important to him. He was not prepared for a fresh beginning. Sad to say, his efforts to meet Jesus and the opportunity it offered proved fruitless due to this closed attitude. (Mk. 10:22)

If we desire to proclaim Jesus to the world around us with our living witness, we must be ready for an unconditional willingness to be transformed daily into His image. This has to happen, lest we fail in our precious mission (Rejoice and be glad #24). God's supernatural grace flows into such an attitude of willingness and we will experience the work of God who makes everything new within us. Energized by this new grace, we will be able to join Him in His work of creation and renewal around us. Being a missionary "is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world" (cf. CV. # 253,254).

Let this prayer always rise up within: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10) as we continue our journey to be His authentic missionary disciples.

