



On this sixth day of the novena, we will reflect on the figure of Esther, the beautiful mediator

When one reads the history of Esther it's almost impossible not to laugh. The narration is full of characters that are exaggeratedly immature. Just imagine that a king would dethrone his queen because she disobeys one of his orders because he is scared that all the women in his kingdom would follow her example and then no man would never again be respected by his woman... Or that his second in command would order to murder whole nation because one of its members wouldn't kneel down when he passes on the street... Sounds ridicule, doesn't it? But one stops laughing when one thinks that our real world is full of people like this, immature and exaggerating in their reactions, and that they are governing us. The ambition is one of the evils also in our times.



In such a world is where lives Esther. She is beautiful and overprotected. Since her childhood she was spoiled by her uncle Murdoc, later by the eunuchs of palace, late by the king himself. Her life was comfortable, accommodated, secure. She never had to take important decision or to be courageous. She hides her true identity under his foreign name. Her position makes her believe that nothing bad can happen to her, even when they murder her whole nation. Until when Murdoc draws her of her erroneous convictions telling her: "Do not think that because of staying at king's house you alone will be free from among all the Jews, because if you keep being silent in this occasion, by some other means the rescue and liberation will come, while you and your family will die" (Est 4:13-14). These words make her wake up and act: her character is very weak, she almost faints when she has to appear in front of the king, but even such a weak instrument can be used by God to save his people. This manages to save the Jews and makes God revert their luck: now the enemies of the people of God are persecuted and attacked, while the Jews forever are going to celebrate this event as their feast day.

And in the shadow I looked attentively at the incomparable beauty of the Daughter of God [...] Beautiful Esther! Your indescribable beauty will never pass away ... I represent the eternal beauty of God: MR 4, 17.

In the writings of Francisco Palau, Esther represents the beauty of the Church. Her beauty and its effect are such that it is capable of obtaining from God anything in favor of her people. The Jews then, and the Church in times of Palau and in our times, live in the hostile and pagan ambience. They have to hide their true identity, and sometimes they are even forced to collaborate with the oppressing forces. The Book of Esther presents the alternative: collaboration and coexistence but without leaving aside what one is, without losing what is essential, without losing our true identity. The beauty that Palau discovers in Esther questions him and becomes his mission: "My mission reduces to announcing to the peoples that you are infinitely beautiful and amiable, and to preach them to love you. Love of God, love of neighbor: this is the object of my mission. And you are the neighbors forming in God one thing" (MR 12,2).

The topicality of the personage of Esther is more than patent. We live in a world where evangelical values are distant: a world dominated by unhealthy ambition, immaturity, favoritism, intolerance to what is different, what provokes divisions and even hatred in society and in the Church. Inserted in this situation,

sometimes we make an option for hiding our true identity, of not being "so radical" in our way of living. Other times, we think that our social position of consecrated persons will guarantee for us a secure and comfortable life. It is easy to forget that we are members with one body will all the weak, suffering, poor, persecuted, maltreated, sold. It is easy to forget that when one member suffers, all the body suffers. We need to be awakened; we need to stop being silent in front of injustices. We need to awaken our beauty, the one of the beloved daughters of God the Father, the one of the spouses of Jesus Christ, the one of the followers who allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and to put this beauty in defense of the people in need. The beauty of the Church, so loved by my Francisco Palau, lives in each one of us. As pope Francis reminds us: "Everything is interconnected". Let us never allow that the commodity of our position in the Church and in society might make us indifferent in front of the suffering of our people, of the body that is also ours.





What realities of your closest environment need to be restored in their beauty?

To end this reflection, let us read a fragment of the Letter of Saint Paul to Corinthians recalling that we truly are only one body and that the sufferings of each member are also ours, and that we just cannot remain indifferent.

“For as the body is one, and has a number of parts, and all the parts make one body, so is Christ (...) Those parts which seem to be feeble are the more necessary; And to those parts of the body which seem to have less honor we give all the more honor; and to those parts of the body which are a cause of shame to us we give the greater respect; But those parts of the body which are beautiful have no need of such care: and so the body has been joined together by God in such a way as to give more honor to those parts which had need of it; So that there might be no division in the body; but all the parts might have the same care for one another. And if there is pain in one part of the body, all the parts will be feeling it; or if one part is honored, all the parts will be glad. Now you are the body of Christ, and every one of you the separate parts of it” (1Cor 12,12.22-26).

intercession

Intercede for the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, members of our Body ...

Let us ask for the grace that we desire through the intercession of Bto. Francisco Palau

Almighty and merciful God and Father, we thank and bless you for instilling

in the heart of Blessed Francisco Palau a singular love for the

Church, the mystical Body of Christ, by revealing to him her

beauty as illustrated in Mary, and inspiring him

to serve her through prayer and apostolic activity.

Grant us his prompt canonization in the Church and the special grace we are asking through his intercession. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

