

REDEMPTION 1

“I have come so that they may have Life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10).

Saint Thomas Aquinas is the great Master on the mystery of Redemption. His approach is full of serenity and depth and prevents against any path of distortion leading to anxiety and aggressiveness.

At the foot of the Cross, the heart of our perspective must be the Merciful Love of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is also the teaching of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, *“victim of the Merciful Love”*.

“How can the man who has no love have any knowledge of God, since God is Love?” (1Jn 4:8).

A. Errors and deformations

The absence of true Love and, consequently, of knowledge about Redemption leads to weird convulsions and pessimism opposed to serenity and vigorous optimism that are the fruits of this Mystery.

1. Criminal substitution

Luther in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians wrote that *“whatever sins we all have committed, they are also those of Christ (propria Christi)”*. *“Christ really became the Cursed according to the Law, not for Himself, but for us.”* Unfortunately, this very error is to be found in many “Catholic” writings.

“What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor 4:7). Divine justice with human beings is not equal to equal: we are debtors.

In crowning the merits of the saints, God crowns His own gifts, states St Augustine and the Council of Trent. Sin hardly reaches the Word made flesh, His soul and His body, but does not take anything away from Divine perfection.

Divine justice is proportional justice and is exercised only on guilty persons, not on innocents. Christ suffered for the sins of mankind, out of Merciful Love and not out of vindictive justice.

2. “Wrath of the Father”

According to Calvin, *“the obligation to submit to punishment has been transposed on the head of the Son of God”*. *“He was precious (to His Father), He felt at the same time the severity of Divine revenge and, answering for us to the righteousness of God, He thus satisfies His just judgment”*. So, God would have justly avenged Himself on God made man. We find the same hostility or wrath of the Father against his Son among certain Catholic authors.

3. Infernal Punishment

Calvin commenting on *“He descended into hell”* affirms that our Lord suffered infernal penalties. Some Catholic writers wrote that He suffered, in some way, the pain of Damed till despair.

B. Reactions

These Protestant and Jansenist opinions on Redemption are affecting the knowledge about God, Faith and, thus, Hope and Charity. Fr. Thomas Dehau, o.p. opposed strongly these opinions close to blasphemy. *“We in France, we have the mind and even more the imagination often distorted by Jansenism. Too many books due to its influence and of which we do not beware enough, show us Divine justice striving against Its victim in the mystery of Redemption. Not at all, this is Love. To put justice into account of what belongs to Love is a diabolical perversion. There is only the devil to subtilize thus: to take away from Love His adorable Victim ... and to make Him the victim of the justice (Le contemplatif et la Croix).*

One only destroys what one replaces. Without denying justice, one must avoid considering thereby any vindictive justice.

1. Redemptive Incarnation

With original sin, human nature is wounded, not destroyed. Protestantism and its Jansenist offspring break Divine equilibrium. Only sin introduced unbalance and disorder. Only the scandal of original sin is cause of the scandal of the Cross.

In the midst of today’s liberalism, confusion, inconsistency and globalization, mankind opposes the universality of this sin and Redemption.

2. Incarnation, Cross, Resurrection and Ascension

God had admirably, *mirabiliter*, established the dignity of human nature; He is going to reform it, to recreate it even more admirably, *mirabilius*.

He took our flesh, which has sinned, and becomes the head of the Mystical Body. He fights against the devil to redeem our race. The Passion of Christ and His Resurrection are the causes of justification, source of our victory.

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, (as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but much more now in my absence,) with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will (Phil. 2:8-13).

St Thomas Aquinas in his Summa explains that *“in the order of our resurrection, what is first is the Resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the Resurrection of Christ must be the cause of our resurrection”* (III Qu.56 a.1). In the following question, he adds that *“the passion of Christ is, in the proper sense, the cause of our ascension to heaven, by removing sin which closed the entrance to it, and by mode of merit. Thus, the Ascension of Christ is the direct cause of our own ascension, because it has begun in the head, to which its members must be united”* (III Qu.57 a.6).

The Mystery of Redemption is the secret of the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us via His substitutive, His vicarly satisfaction. *“Yes, He is obviously the great Sacrament of Mercy manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by the angels, preached among the pagans, believed in the world and assumed in the glory”* (1Tim 3:16).