Only God!

Introduction

I. The Kingdom of Christ

Jesus Christ does not rule in the universe like an earthly king; he said this himself: My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. He did not say that he was not reigning over the world, but that his kingdom did not belong to this world, that is it did not have its characteristics and it was of a different nature: but as it is my kingdom is not here (Jn 18:36). The kings of this earth impose themselves with power and seek their own gains and glory; they dominate not reign, because in reality, with all their laws and their malice, they represent more accurately a violent imposition rather than a government of love. Their subjects are always more or less rebellious, and they champ at the bit; the faithful to the regime represent an interested minority that remains faithful only because they have their own gains. This is the true story of all kingdoms on earth.

Never has a king succeeded in having a kingdom of love: had he succeeded, he would have had no need of fighting or an army. The words of Jesus: If my kingdom did belong to this world my attendants would be fighting are of an admirable depth, and they accurately characterize the kingdoms of this earth: they represent a more or less continuous struggle and constant hidden motives.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is a true kingdom; it is the only true kingdom, regardless what the spineless adorers of the state say, they who are scandalized every time they believe that people fail to have a servile respect for authorities of earth. The kingdoms of the world are either administrative, and more or less comforted and affected by pathological state-worshippers, or are dominions of a single reigning house, or of a single group that controls everything, absolutely and exclusively for its own interests.

Some truths are bitter, but they are truths to which nobody can disagree, because they bear the characteristics of axioms. It is enough to look at history - contemporary or past history - either there is a king ruling in his own interests, or a party ruling in the interest of its members.

However, human commands never reach the soul and the heart; they are continuous impositions applied with the sounds of arms and of the military, and almost always end in rebellion and the passing of one bully to another. The more a state is authoritarian, thereby having the appearance of a true dominion, the less the subjects are subject to it in their souls and hearts.

** When Don Dolindo was writing, in Italy there was one only party, the Fascist Party, and in Germany the Nazis ruled; for this reason this observation had a flavor of actuality and Christian courage. (The footnotes with asterisk * are observations by the Bishop Vittorio Maria Costantini, Bishop of Sessa Aurunca, Caserta, Italy and by the editor, Fr. Settimio Maria Mannelli, Biblist, who revised this present edition.)

All kingdoms in history, in general, can be understood in the following way: a ruler imposes himself by force, at least on part of a nation; the laws imposed are proportional to the motives of the ruler and in reality, are always a source of hateful oppression and imposition for a part of the people. Law after law is created on whim or through
arrogance, taxes upon taxes and restrictions of all kinds, gagging liberty, thought, and even our religion, against which they usually rage because, even helpless, our religion defends the divine right and human dignity.

It will never be forgotten in the history of human arrogance the self-described ‘legality’ with which the despicable tyrant, Adolph Hitler, is said to have assumed the supreme power in Germany. Here is the text of the law that nominated him as head of the Reich: Article 1: The Chancellor of the Reich Adolph Hitler is nominated in perpetuity as head of the German state. Article 2: This law is effective immediately. Signed: Adolph Hitler. Later he said to the four winds that he had been instituted head of the Reich not with violence but through legal means. This is insolence pushed to folly.

It is not useless for us to ponder on these considerations; actually we should it more deeply in order to understand what a heavenly gift for us is the regality of Jesus Christ for the Church and in the Church. If man does not open his eyes and does not see the loving magnificence of this regality, he will always remain shackled to the block of earthly slavery, desperate and with no hope of light. If he does not understand the value - human, social and civic - of redemption and the beneficial repercussions of it in his life, he shall believe it always to be a way of participating in a form of cult, suitable to address a certain need for the divine, but outside the reality of life. We are too accustomed, maybe unconsciously, to regard the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the Church and for the Church in the same way in which we regard wretched religious sects, fragments of faith, generated by Satan, or childish philosophies hatched by the brains of madmen.

P 3 We are too used to putting at the same level of the celestial ecliptic, a candle stub and the sun, and to gaze upon with the same attention and appreciation, a putrescent sewer and the splendid mantle of the firmament.

It is necessary to come out from these insidious snares that shackle our thoughts and our lives, remnants of our miserable fallen nature; it is necessary to look at you, Redeemer Jesus, immortal King of the centuries, and to throw ourselves in the arms of your bleeding love that reigns, regenerating us continuously in the cry of the spasm and the immolation of the Blood.

The cross has been the regal bed on which you, Jesus, regenerated your subjects, and your Blood has run like a river of love to give us life.

You are the priestly victim; you ignore the conquest of vengeful blood, knowing only the conquest of the merciful Blood that gives life.

You do not know the impetuosity imposed by terror, but the mercy that is attracted with love.

You do not ask, you give.

You do not subdue, you free.

You do not impose yourself upon reason, you ennoble it.

You do not have an army, but apostles.

You do not have generals, but bishops; you do not have a custodian of the fortress, but the shepherd of the flock, free on the free fields of grace and love.

This is Your kingdom, and it is logical that it is not of this world, because it does not have any similarity with the dissonant kingdoms of our poor earth.

II. The Gospel of mercy
The Gospel of the kingdom, that we meditate in St. Mark’s Gospel is followed by the Gospel of immolation and of mercy, that determines the characteristics and the ways of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The lion that leaps upon the bastions of the world, roaring with love to prey upon love, is followed by the ox that ploughs fertile fields, and represents the victim of the altar. The configuration of the four evangelists as the four animals seen by Ezekiel is now in the classic tradition of the Church and cannot be put aside; its meaning is wider than we believe; its transcendent poetry is more beautiful than it is appreciated because in truth the four Gospels are the four aspects of Christ the Savior: the man, the King, the Victim and God; the pilgrim on our earth, the ruler of the centuries, the Priest and Victim, and the divine conqueror that carries away on his eagle’s wings the miserable human creatures up to eternal heights.

The Gospel of Luke is called by the Fathers “The Gospel of Mercy” and mercy supposes a victim and an immolation. Everything is harmonious in this plan. The inspired author is a converted pagan, as it is usually believed, indicated by his very name Luke, which comes from the Roman name Lucius. He was from Antioch, he was an excellent medical doctor and fluent in the Greek language, as is seen from the classic and elegant way in which he writes. As a physician, he was used to having compassion and curing human sicknesses and had a natural attitude toward mercy; as man of letters he had sensitivity toward feelings. He remained a virgin, did not marry, and once converted to the faith, he kept his purity blameless. True purity, the fruit of virtue and love, generates in the soul sensitivity and a compassion for the failings of the poor human heart.

The harshest judges of the poor fragility of sinners are not found among souls who are pure, but among those who know the slavery of the flesh.

It is very possible that the human reason that motivated St. Luke to write his Gospel was indeed a feeling of compassion toward sinners. He heard the preaching of so many events on the goodness of Jesus and not having found them in any book, he thought to record them, almost as prescriptions of mercy to cure souls. The apostles, from fishermen became fishers of souls and he, from physician of bodies became physician of souls. He knew the pathology of sin in the sicknesses he cured, and he wanted to give to the sinners the relief of the divine mercy. God is marvelous in every disposition of His goodness; He made use of the compassion of St. Luke toward the sinners oppressed by sicknesses resulting from their sins, to leave to us a most precious memory of the mercy of our Savior.

St. Luke, who was a virgin, dealt more closely with the Immaculate Virgin, and he knew from Her the details of Jesus’ infancy; a virgin evangelist, St. John, pushed his gaze all the way to the eternal generation of the Word; an evangelist virgin and doctor could talk to Mary, Mother of Mercy and gather from her most pure lips the stories of the fulfillment of the divine mercy upon earth with the Incarnation of the Word.

Being a physician, he could appreciate, more than others, the miracle of the virginal conception, and he could affirm it with the authority of a person who could not believe such an incredible miracle, if he had not perceived in the story of Mary, and we could say, in her somatic traits, the splendor of that virginity which was beyond any comparison. Our minds remain in admiration of the marvelous ways of divine providence, that does everything with infinite wisdom, leaving nonetheless untouched human free will.
From the Blessed Mother he learned the beauty of virginity and mercy, and maybe for this reason he remained a virgin; his heart, in contact with the most pure lily, became spotless and perfumed, succumbing to the divine love. Fascinated with the divine mercy, he wrote his Gospel, to prove that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all people, be they Jews or pagans.

He was a disciple of Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, whom he met at Troas, and he was familiar with those who were eyewitnesses of the Redeemer, when He was walking on earth to evangelize it; because St. Luke was originally a pagan, he wanted to show that the kingdom of God was open to everybody for His infinite mercy, to the Jews, to Samaritans, to pagans, to publicans or sinners, to rich or poor, to all men of good will. He kept for us the account of the most beautiful pieces of the mercy of Jesus Christ: Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, the conversion of the thief on the cross on Calvary, the apparition to the disciples at Emmaus, and also the parables of the Pharisee and the publican, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, Lazarus, the rich glutton and so on.

He was not a eyewitness of the accounts he wrote, however, as he himself states at the beginning of his book, he recorded with care and precision the testimony of those who had been with Jesus Christ. He not only recorded the preaching of Paul, of whom he was a disciple, but he also did an accurate historical inquiry, perhaps also in opposition to those apocryphal gospels that already were beginning to appear among Christians. His Gospel, then, has an enormous historical value because it is the synthesis and the accounts of the eyewitnesses that were the contemporaries of Jesus Christ.

To whom the book is dedicated.

As St. Luke states in the prologue, he dedicated his book to a certain Theophilus, believed to be one of his friends, who also converted from paganism to Christianity as he did. However he did not write only for him but for all the faithful, and especially for the pagans, because of the great pain he felt for them for their blindness. In fact he avoids in his Gospel that which could alienate them. For example, instead of putting in opposition to the children of God, the nations or the pagans, as St. Matthew (Mt, 5:47) he opposes the sinners, a general term that could apply to Jews as well as to pagans; instead of saying, as St. Matthew (Mt, 6:32) all these things the pagans seek, he softens the sentence saying after these things go men of the world. He is careful to speak of public officials of the Empire, avoiding to blame the pagans for the fault of the death of Jesus (Lk, 23:25) and does not mention the episode of the Canaanite woman (Mt, 15:22) to whom Jesus had addressed in a not flattering way from the point of a view of a pagan.**All these nuances, and many others, in addition to demonstrating the historic truth of the book and its author, give it an eternal freshness that marvels us. For the same motives, he is silent on the woman having an issue of blood that in vain had paid doctors and medicine to be healed, for a sensitivity and respect toward his fellow physicians.

When it was written.

It is contested when the Gospel of St. Luke was written. The view that to us seems
most credible is based on an affirmation by St. Paul. The apostle, in his second letter to the Corinthians, written in the year 58, states that of St. Luke is praised for his Gospel; thus in 58 the book must have already been written; since he had met St Paul in 51, the book had to be written after the year 51 and before 58.

His book can be regarded as consisting of a prologue and five parts; in the prologue there is the dedication and the reason why he writes the book; the infancy of Jesus Christ and his hidden life (Lk 1- 4:13); in the second part, Jesus’ ministry in Galilee (Lk, 4:14 – 9:50); in the third, the last journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (Lk,9:51 – 19:27); in the fourth the Passion and Death (Lk,19:28 - 23:56) and in the fifth, the Resurrection of the Lord, subsequent apparitions and of Jesus’ ascension into Heaven (Lk, 24).

He wrote, as we mentioned before, in a very elegant Greek, that in those times was the most widely understood language of the known world. Some attribute to him the ability of a skilled painter, besides being a physician, and in fact there are several images of the Blessed Virgin that the popular tradition ascribes to his brush. We do not deny this; as a learned person it is possible that also he knew how to paint; however the most beautiful paintings he left to us are his accounts of the Gospel, that are colored with the most brilliant truth.

He lived to the old age of 84 years, and after having accompanied St. Paul to Rome, he traveled , as it is reported by St. Epiphanius, to Dalmatia, Gaul, Italy and Macedonia. He died as a martyr in Patras, a city of Achaea.

** The choice to recount some episodes in the life of the Lord, to select some and not other events, does not alter at all the historic truth of those narrated. What the evangelist wrote is the truth, guaranteed by divine inspiration. St. Luke wrote that he did not write everything that could be said about Jesus, what the Teacher had said or had done. For this reason the words of the apostle and evangelist St. John apply equally to the narrative of St. Luke. St. John said, in relation to the Gospel he had written (Jn, 21:25): “There are many things that Jesus did, that if they could be written one by one, I believe that the world would not be big enough to contain all the books that should be written.”

III. The Gospel of Mary

Let us collect ourselves to meditate on this precious book that can be called the Gospel of Mary. What our Blessed Mother kept in her immaculate heart and did not say to anyone, she told to St. Luke and we must be grateful to this evangelist who kept for us the memory of a story so tender and admirable. Had he kept for us only the Magnificat, he would already deserve all our devotion and gratitude.

He was a very good doctor, as can be seen from the very way in which he describes the various ailments, for which he uses technical terms in the same way as they are found in the works of his contemporaries and especially in Dioscorides; we can, therefore, go to him with our sicknesses and beg him to intercede for us with the Most Blessed Virgin, to obtain for us especially the health of our souls and the gift of eternal life.

It is very soothing for us to meditate on this Gospel of mercy, because we are poor sinners, and it is most wonderful to meet along on our way the Queen of Mercy. What a marvel it is to read such beautiful poetry and know that the way of truth brings us to Heaven! The story fascinates us but does not satisfy our curiosity, it nourishes the heart
and pushes us to become wholly of God.

O Mary it is enough to see you, perfumed flower of our exile, to become revived in our painful pilgrimage; it is enough to see the divine fruit of your breast, to feel immersed in the divine mercy!

Where can we find more reassuring words in which to trust? Where can the heart find more wonderful forgiveness?

We are sinners, but the Blood of your Son is our trust, and you are the loving mother that brings us to Him, taking us into the arms of His love. Give us, o Mary, the grace to follow Jesus like little sheep to His sheepfold. And with your merciful love take us to the pastures of eternal life.

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