**SATURDAY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

# CAUSE OF OUR JOY

We can acknowledge why the Virgin Mary is the Cause of our joy, meditating upon three figures the Old Testament offers: Jael, Judith, Esther.

Jael is cause of great joy for she killed Sisera, the enemy of her people: *“Blessed among women be Jael, blessed among tent-dwelling women. He asked for water, she gave him milk; in a princely bowl she offered curds. With her left hand she reached for the peg, with her right, for the workman's mallet. She hammered Sisera, crushed his head; she smashed, stove in his temple. At her feet he sank down, fell, lay still; down at her feet he sank and fell; where he sank down, there he fell, slain. From the window peered down and wailed the mother of Sisera, from the lattice: "Why is his chariot so long in coming? why are the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed?" The wisest of her princesses answers her, and she, too, keeps answering herself: "They must be dividing the spoil they took: there must be a damsel or two for each man, Spoils of dyed cloth as Sisera's spoil, an ornate shawl or two for me in the spoil." (Jdg 5,24-30).*

Judith is cause of unsayable joy and exultance for she cut Holophernes’ head, the one who had decided to devastate the people of the Lord: *“"But the Lord Almighty thwarted them, by a woman's hand he confounded them. Not by youths was their mighty one struck down, nor did titans bring him low, nor huge giants attack him; But Judith, the daughter of Merari, by the beauty of her countenance disabled him. She took off her widow's garb to raise up the afflicted in Israel. She anointed her face with fragrant oil; with a fillet she fastened her tresses, and put on a linen robe to beguile him. Her sandals caught his eyes, and her beauty captivated his mind. The sword cut through his neck. "The Persians were dismayed at her daring, the Medes appalled at her boldness. When my lowly ones shouted, they were terrified; when my weaklings cried out, they trembled; at the sound of their war cry, they took to flight.” (Jdt 16,5-11).*

Esther is cause, source of joy because, with her intercession, she let the people not be destroyed. She did not hesitate to put her life into risk: *“On the third day, putting an end to her prayers, she took off her penitential garments and arrayed herself in her royal attire. In making her state appearance, after invoking the all-seeing God and savior, she took with her two maids; on the one she leaned gently for support, while the other followed her, bearing her train. She glowed with the perfection of her beauty and her countenance was as joyous as it was lovely, though her heart was shrunk with fear. She passed through all the portals till she stood face to face with the king, who was seated on his royal throne, clothed in full robes of state, and covered with gold and precious stones, so that he inspired great awe. As he looked up, his features ablaze with the height of majestic anger, the queen staggered, changed color, and leaned weakly against the head of the maid in front of her. But God changed the king's anger to gentleness. In great anxiety he sprang from his throne, held her in his arms until she recovered, and comforted her with reassuring words. "What is it, Esther?" he said to her. "I am your brother. Take courage! You shall not die because of this general decree of ours. Come near!" (Est D,1 11).*

These three Women, figures of the Virgin Mary, have exposed their lives so that the people of the Lord would enjoy freedom, peace, tranquillity, so that they would not live as slaves of the powerful and tyrants of the earth.

The Virgin Mary is the source of our joy because she surrendered herself to the plan of salvation of our Lord and God. In Her the Redeemer of the world was conceived, through Her he was born, with Her at the cross he offered his sacrifice for our salvation. There is no true joy on earth that does not spring from great, immense, boundless sorrow. The Virgin Mary brings forth from her womb all joy for the Christian people because of her martyrdom at the cross, when the sword of pain and suffering pierced her soul, according to Simeon's prophecy. No pain is comparable to the pain with which the Mother of Jesus was pierced.

The Christian is also called to be a source of joy, of gladness, of rejoicing. How will it be possible for him to become this source? In order to become this source, the Christian must always have his roots planted in the Church, in the Scripture, in the Spirit. If he says he is planted in the Holy Spirit, but he is not planted in the Scripture and the Church, he will only be a creator of false hope, because he will proclaim ways of salvation that do not belong to Christ. If he says he is planted in the Church, but not in Scripture and the Holy Spirit, he will always lack that true wisdom, actual wisdom, wisdom in speaking and acting to fulfil the mission entrusted to him. If he says he dwells in the Scripture, but not in the Church and not in the Holy Spirit, what the Holy Spirit says through the mouth of the Apostle Paul will be fulfilled for him. He possesses a lifeless letter, a letter that brings death to the truth, because he becomes a bearer of a dead word. That is why the roots must simultaneously be planted in the Church, in the Scripture, in the Holy Spirit. Another soil in which the roots must be planted is the heart of the Virgin. When our roots are planted in her heart, She will always help us to plant them in the heart of the Church, in the heart of the Holy Spirit, in the heart of Scripture. Angels and Saints of Heaven, obtain for us the grace to always have our roots planted in the heart of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Redemption. **28 July 2024**