

## XV ORDINARY TIME– 11th July 2021

### HE BEGAN TO SEND THEM – Biblical Commentary by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

#### Ephesians 1-3-14

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making know to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

This Sunday, instead of the gospel, that can be found already commented on You tube, I choose to comment on the second reading because it is a precious text: it is the letter of Paul to the Ephesians. Paul greets the saints who are in Ephesus, "saints" does not mean those that are canonized; it was a way that believers had to call themselves because, through baptism, they had renounced evil and had chosen to live for others. These are the "saints."

Paul begins with a triple benediction, the number three, meaning 'that which is complete' saying "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...*" so, there is an overflowing abundance with blessing and what is this blessing for? Here Paul writes something extraordinary "...he..." Jesus Christ "... chose us in him before the foundation of the world..." We didn't come into the world by chance, but we came into the world because, even before creating the world, God had thought of us and he had chosen us. This means that we are the masterpiece of creation and every event that we encounter in our life, even the most difficult, the most painful, will not prevent God carrying out his plan through us. We came into the world because the Father needs each one of us to manifest himself in new, original and creative forms, through manifestations of love and compassion for him.

"...that we should be holy and blameless before him..." holy or saintly, we have seen means separated from evil, blameless that which makes the person impure according to the teaching of Jesus is the evil that voluntarily one does towards others, while the good brings us closer more and more to God, and in charity. The term used by Paul and "agape", the Greek term is disinterested

love, a love that is the same love with which God loves us, who does not look for the merits of the people, but their needs.

Here Paul writes something incredible and extraordinary, “*..he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons..*” , The adoption to which Paul refers does not mean welcoming a child into a family, but it was an institution juridical used by the emperors who, seeing the end of their life, never left their reign to one of their sons, but they identified among the officers and generals the one they believed capable of carrying on their empire. We have had so many emperors who have been adopted, from Tiberius, Augustus, Marcus Aurelius, Trajan and Hadrian were all adoptive emperors. Then Paul is saying something extraordinary: that God, thinking of us before the creation of the world, he has so much confidence, he has so much hope in us that he considers us capable of collaborating with him at creation. Because the creation is not finished. In the book of Genesis it is not the regret for an irremediably lost paradise, but the prophecy of a paradise to be built to which we are all called to collaborate. For this Jesus had said “*My Father is working until now, and I am working.*”(John 5,17)

So this project to which we are called is that we were created to create, communicate life, we are alive to vivify and we are loved to empower others through our love of welcoming love. And Paul concludes “*...having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...*” here is what God's will is: God's will does not coincide, as is sometimes said, with the negative events of our life, but God's will is that we have the divine condition, how? Through a practice of a love similar to his, that he has for us.