

... I was for them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks...

Homily, July 7, 2016

Hosea 11,1-4.8-9

father. G. Paparone o.p.

We have heard these beautiful words of the prophet Hosea that speak to us of **this moving love of God for us**.

A tender, compassionate, patient love, a love able to deeply move considering the foolishness, poverty and misery of us, human beings, who constantly avoid His love.

They did not understand that I was their healer, I led them by the hand, says the Lord. I punished them, I hit them, but despite this, they did not understand, they continued to fail to understand...

The Lord instead of piling it on, getting angry, reacting negatively, what does He do? He tries to increase His love: *I will not give vent to my anger, I will try to increase my love for them, led them with kindness ties.*

It is beautiful this image of God who wants to raise us to His cheeks as does a mother with her baby. We know that this increase of mercy, **this multiplication of His compassion became incarnate, visible, evident in the person of Jesus**.

When they say in the Gospel that Jesus saw the people and had compassion for them, we have to glimpse the compassionate love of God in that statement, manifested through the book of the prophet Hosea.

It is often said that the Old Testament God is an austere and bad God, a cruel God who wants wars, and we forget that there is a compassionate God, a loving God, a merciful God who loves us as a mother does.

So, dear friends, when we think of God, let us think of this expression: **God wants to raise us and lean us to His cheeks**.

I leave you with this thought: **whenever you think of Jesus, of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, The Trinity, think of this love that would raise us from our miseries, from our limitations and lean upon His breast, His cheeks...**

Praised be Jesus Christ.