July 26th: Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:16-17): Jesus said to his disciples, «But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears, because they hear. For I tell you that many prophets and upright people would have longed to see the things you see, but they did not, and to hear the things you hear, but they did not hear it».

«But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears, because they hear»

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Today, the Gospel speaks of happiness. The desire to be happy is certainly a universal ambition of all human beings. If we ask anyone: «would you like to be happy», the subsequent answer will always be the same: «Yes, I do». Instead, there is no unanimity to determine what true happiness consists of. On different occasions, though, Jesus speaks about the authentic happiness and where we can find it. By repeating what He says in today's Gospel, Jesus asserts that happiness is to be found when seeing him and hearing his words, because with him the definite days have arrived (cf. Heb 1:1-2); so much so, that just glancing at his person we can speak of a before and an after him.

Thus, as a preparation for the new time to come, God has to use human elements: to become part of our history, the Son needs a mother, and this mother will be Mary; the Blessed Virgin also needed parents who were Joachim and Anne. Without knowing it, they will become Messiah's grandparents. By applying St. Paul's words to the Ephesians (1:9-10), they could have said: «He has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times».

St. John Damascene quite rightly congratulates the blessed couple with these words: «Joachim and Anne how blessed and spotless! You will be known by the fruit you have borne». How happy those parents must be, lucky enough to have sons that admire their mutual fidelity while being grateful for their generous behavior, through which they have received their human and Christian existence. But, how happy those sons must also be, who are lucky to know Jesus Christ more and better, as they have received from their respective parents their Christian formation with the example of their family life through prayer.