

Thursday 2nd of Advent

Gospel text (Mt 11,11-15): Jesus said to the crowds, «No one greater than John the Baptist has come forward among the sons of women, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the unyielding seize it. Up to the time of John, there was only prophesy: all the prophets and the Law; and if you believe me, John is this Elijah, whose coming was predicted. Let anyone with ears listen!».

«The kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the unyielding seize it»

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Today, the Gospel speaks of John the Baptist, the Messiah's Precursor, he who has come to prepare the paths of the Lord. He will stay with us until the sixteenth day, when the first part of Advent comes to an end.

John is a resolute man, who is very aware of the value of things, who is conscious of the fact that struggle is necessary to improve and be holy. That's why Jesus says: «From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the unyielding seize it» (Mt 11:12). The “unyielding” ones are those who are unyielding to themselves: Do I struggle to believe that the Lord loves me too? Do I sacrifice myself to “make myself small”? Do I make the effort to be conscious of the fact that I am my Father's son and live accordingly?

Saint Teresa de Lisieux refers to these words from Jesus saying something which can help us in our personal and intimate conversation with the Son of Man: «It is you, oh poverty!, my first sacrifice; I'll be together with you until I die! I know that the athlete, once at the stadium, rids himself of everything in order to run. You, worldly people, can savor the pity and anguish that come from the vanity of your bitter fruits; I, joyous, will get the prize of triumph from poverty». And me, why do I complain as soon as I sense that I lack something I consider necessary? I wish I could see things as clearly as Teresa in all aspects of my life!

In a very mysterious way, Jesus says to us today: «John is this Elijah, whose coming was predicted. Let anyone with ears listen!» (Mt 11:14-15). What does he mean? He wants to make it clear to us that John was his true forerunner, who carried out the same mission as Elijah, according to the belief, which people at that time had, that the prophet Elijah was supposed to come back before the Messiah.