Thursday of the Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 24:42-51): Jesus said to his disciples: “Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.

“Who, then, is the faithful and prudent servant, whom the master has put in charge of his household to distribute to them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on his arrival finds doing so. Amen, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is long delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards, the servant’s master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”

“So too, you also must be prepared”

Fr. Albert TAULÉ i Viñas
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel passage speaks to us of the uncertainty of the moment of the Lord's coming: "You do not know on which day your Lord will come" (Mt 24:42). If we want him to find us vigilant at the moment of his arrival, we cannot be distracted or fall asleep: we must always be prepared. Jesus gives many examples of this alertness: the one who watches for a thief, the servant who wants to please his master... Perhaps today he would speak to us of a soccer goalkeeper who doesn't know when or how the ball will come to him...

But perhaps we should first clarify what coming he is speaking of. Is it the hour of death? Is it the end of the world? Certainly, these are comings of the Lord that He has expressly left uncertain to inspire in us constant alertness. But, calculating the probabilities, perhaps no one of our generation will witness a universal cataclysm that puts an end to human life on this planet. And, as far as death is concerned, this will only be once and that's enough. Until this comes, isn't there another coming closer for which we should always be prepared?

“How the years fly by! Months are reduced to weeks, weeks to days, days to hours, and hours to seconds…” (St. Francis de Sales). Every day, every hour, every moment, the Lord is close to our lives. Through internal inspirations, through the people around us, through the events that unfold, the Lord knocks at our door and, as the Book of Revelation says: " Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20). Today, if we receive Communion, this will happen again. Today, if we patiently listen to the problems others confide in us or generously give our money to help someone in need, this will happen again. Today, if in our personal prayer we suddenly receive an unexpected inspiration, this will happen again.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “The despised faults get that, if the soul gets used to them, it ends up not giving importance to either the minor faults or the serious ones. That is why the Lord admonishes us in the "Song of Songs": 'Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines'” (St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori)

- “In a world far from God and, therefore, from love, one feels cold, to the point of causing the gnashing of teeth” (Benedict XVI)

- “By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No 1731)