

Thursday of the Twenty-first Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 24,42-51): Jesus said to his disciples, «Stay awake, then, for you do not know on what day your Lord will come. Just think about this: if the owner of the house knew that the thief would come by night around a certain hour, he would stay awake to prevent his house to be broken into. So be alert, for the Son of Man will come at the hour you least expect. Imagine a capable servant whom his master has put in charge of his household to give them food at the proper time. Fortunate indeed is that servant whom his master will find at work when he comes. Truly, I say to you, his lord will entrust that one with everything he has. Not so with the bad servant who thinks: ‘My master is delayed’. And he begins ill-treating his fellow servants while eating and drinking with drunkards. But his master will come on the day he does not know and at the hour he least expects. He will dismiss that servant and deal with him as with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth».

«So be alert»

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Today, the evangelic text speaks of the uncertainty of the moment when the Lord will come: «You do not know on what day your Lord will come» (Mt 24:42). If we want him to find us on the alert when He comes, we cannot get absent-minded or asleep: we have to be always alert. Jesus gives many instances of this vigil: the owner who stays awake to prevent his house to be broken into by a thief, the servant who wants to please his master... Today, maybe He would refer instead to a goalkeeper who does not know when, or where from, the ball will shot at him...

But, maybe, we should first clarify which coming is He talking about. Is He referring to our death?; is He talking about the end of the world? Both are certainly comings of the Lord He has expressly left out uncertain to provoke a constant attention on us. But, going by an estimate of probabilities, perhaps none of our generation will bear witness of a universal cataclysm that means the end of human life in this planet. And, insofar as death is concerned, this will be only once and that will be it. But, while this moment does not arrive, is there any other closer coming before which we are to be always on our guard?

«How years go by! Months are reduced to weeks, weeks to days, days to hours, hours to seconds...» (St. Francis de Sales). Every day, every hour, every instant in our life, the Lord is close to us. Through internal inspirations, through the persons around us, through the events that are happening and, as the Apocalypse says: «Behold, I am standing at the door, and I am knocking: if any one hears my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me» (Rev 3:20). Today, if we take the communion, the same thing will happen. Today, if we patiently listen to the problems someone else may be telling us about or if we generously give our money to help the needy, the same thing will happen again. And, if in our personal prayer, today, we —suddenly— receive an unexpected inspiration, the same thing will happen again.