

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
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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 which 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 fall asleep: we have to be always alert. Jesus gives many instances of this vigil: the owner who stays awake to prevent his house from being 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 from where, the ball will shoot at him...

But, maybe, we should first clarify which coming He is 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 uncertain to provoke a constant attention in us. But, going by an estimate of probabilities, perhaps none of our generation will bear witness to a universal cataclysm that means the end of human life on this planet. And, insofar as death is concerned, this will be only once and that will be it. But while waiting for this moment to arrive, is there any nearer coming for which we should always be on 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 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 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.

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)