Thursday of the Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 17:20-25): Asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in reply, “The coming of the Kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, ‘Look, here it is,’ or, ‘There it is.’ For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you.”

Then he said to his disciples, “The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. There will be those who will say to you, ‘Look, there he is,’ or ‘Look, here he is.’ Do not go off, do not run in pursuit. For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation.”

"The kingdom of God is among you"

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Today, the Pharisees ask Jesus, with a mixture of interest, curiosity, fear... something that has always been of interest for all of us: When will the Kingdom of God come? When will the last day be, the end of the world, the return of Christ to judge the living and the dead at the Last Judgment?

Jesus says that it is unpredictable. The only thing we know is that it will come suddenly, without warning: it will be “as lightning flashes” (Lk 17:24), a sudden event, full of light and glory. As for the circumstances, Jesus’ Second Advent remains a mystery. However, He gives us a true and reliable clue: “the Kingdom of God is among you” (Lk 17:21). Or: “inside you.”

The great event of the last day will be a universal reality, but it also takes place within the small microcosm of each one’s heart. It is there that we must seek the Kingdom. Heaven is within us, where we are called to find Jesus.

This Kingdom, which will one day come unpredictably “outside,” can already begin “inside” us now. The final day is already taking shape within each of us. If we wish to enter the Kingdom on the last day, we must welcome the Kingdom within us today. If we want Jesus to be our merciful judge on that definitive day, we must invite Him now as our friend and inner guest.

Saint Bernard, in an Advent sermon, speaks of the three comings of Jesus. The first coming was when He became man; the last will be when He comes as judge. There is also an intermediate advent, which takes place now in the heart of each person. It is here that the first and last comings become present, personally and experientially. The sentence Jesus will pronounce on the Day of Judgment will be the one that already echoes in our hearts. What is yet to come is already a present reality.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When the day was already declining towards its sunset, the Lord delivered, on the cross, the soul that he would later recover, because he did not lose it against his will. We were also represented there!” (San Agustin)

- “Even suffering, the daily cross of life —the cross of work, of the family, of carrying out things well— this small daily cross is part of the Kingdom of God” (Francis)

- "In the Eucharist... as distinct from the prayers of the old covenant, rely on the mystery of salvation already accomplished, once for all, in Christ crucified and risen." (Catechism of the Church Catholic, no. 2,771)