

Thursday 32nd in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 17,20-25): The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was to come. He answered, «The kingdom of God is not like something you can observe and say of it: ‘Look, here it is! There it is!’. See, the kingdom of God is among you».

And Jesus said to his disciples, «The time is at hand when you will long to see one of the glorious days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Then people will tell you: ‘Look there! Look here!’. Do not go, do not follow them. As lightning flashes from one end of the sky to the other, so will it be with the Son of Man. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this people».

«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 over? when will it be the last day, the end of the world, Christ's return to judge the living and the dead in the day of the Last Judgment?

Jesus tells them that this is unpredictable. We only know that it will suddenly come, without notice: it will be «As lightning» (Lk 17:24), a sudden occurrence, full of light and glory, at the same time. As for other circumstances, Jesus' second advent remains a complete mystery. But Jesus gives us a true and certain clue: as of now, «the kingdom of God is among you» (Lk 17:21). Or: «inside you».

The great event of the last day will be a universal accomplishment, but it also happens in the little microcosm of each one's heart. It is there where we must actually seek the Kingdom. Heaven can be found deep inside us, where we must also find Jesus.

This Kingdom that unpredictably will start “outside” may commence right now “inside” us. The last day starts its configuration right now, inside us. If we want to be allowed into the Kingdom in that last day, we must let the Kingdom get inside us, right now. If we want Jesus to be our merciful judge in that particular moment, we better make him right now our best friend and our inside guest.

St. Bernard, in a sermon for Advent, speaks of the three advents of Christ. The first advent, which we now commemorate as Christmas; the third advent, is the Parousia, the advent in which Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, and to take us to himself. Then St. Bernard explains the second, or middle, advent as the “time of visitation” by which Christ is now present and active in each of our lives. It is there, where the first and the third advents appear on a personal and experienced level. Jesus' verdict on Judgment's day must already be resounding now in our heart. That, which has yet to arrive, is already now a reality.