

Friday of the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 21:29-33): Jesus told his disciples a parable.

“Consider the fig tree and all the other trees. When their buds burst open, you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near; in the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

“When you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near”

Deacon Fr. Evaldo PINA FILHO

(Brasilia, Brazil)

Today, Jesus invites us to read the signs of our times and era, and to acknowledge in them the closeness of the Kingdom of God. He invites us «Look at the fig tree and all the trees» (Lk 21:29) paying attention to what is happening with them: when you look at them, you “know that summer is now near” (Lk 21:30). The fig trees start to blossom. The buds burst open. It is not only the anticipation of the flowers and fruits that springs up, it is also the prognosis of summer, when all trees "begin to show fruit".

According to Benedict XVI “The Word of God makes us change our concept of realism” Indeed, “the realist is the one who recognizes in the Word of God the foundation of all things.” This Living Word, that shows us the summer as a sign of imminence and exuberance of all things luminous, is the very Light: “When you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near” (Lk 21:31). In this sense, “Now the word is not simply audible; not only does it have a voice, now the word has a face, one which we can see: that of Jesus of Nazareth” (Benedict XVI).

The communication between Jesus and the Father was perfect; and everything He received from the Father, He gave to us by communicating with us in the same perfect way. Thus, the nearness of the Kingdom of God, that articulates God’s free

initiative to come and encounter us, must impel us to recognize that proximity of the Kingdom, so that we can also communicate with the Father in a perfect way by means of the Word of the Lord —*Verbum Domini*—, by appreciating the signs of the Kingdom of God that is so close, as a fulfillment of the Father’s promises in Jesus Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Truth suffers, but never dies.” (Saint Teresa of Jesus)
- “Time is not a reality extrinsic to God. Time was ‘touched’ by Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, and received from Him new and surprising meanings: it became the ‘salvific time’, namely, the definitive time of salvation and grace.” (Francis)
- “(…) The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ's death and Resurrection (…)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 2,816)

Other comments

”The kingdom of God is near”

Fr. Albert TAULÉ i Viñas
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus invites us to see how the fig tree buds sprout, a symbol of our Church that, periodically, is renewing itself thanks to that inner power God instills in it (let us remember the allegory of the vine and the branches, cf. Jn 15): “Consider the fig tree and all the other trees. When their buds burst open, you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near” (Lk 21:29-30).

The eschatological discourse we are reading these days, in its prophetic style, deliberately warps chronology, by placing at the same level things that must happen in different moments. The fact that, in the portion of the fragment chosen for today's liturgy, we have a very limited range, allows us to think that, perhaps, we should assume that what was said then, is said by us, here and now: "This generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place" (Lk 21:32). In fact, Origen already comments: "All this can happen in each one of us; in us, death may remain destroyed, the definite enemy of ours."

Today, I would like to speak as the prophets did: we are about to contemplate a great sprouting in the Church. Look at the signs of the times (cf. Mt 16:3). Soon important things are to happen. Do not be afraid. Remain in your place. Set the seeds enthusiastically. And, afterwards, you will joyfully return carrying your bundled sheaves (cf. Ps 126,6). It is true that the enemy-man will keep on sowing darnel. The evil will not burn until the end of time (cf. Mt 13:30). But the Kingdom of God is already here amidst us. And, through great efforts, it is making his way (cf. Mt 11:12).

Pope Saint John Paul II, said it at the beginning of the third millennium: "Duc in altum", that is "put out into the deep" (cf. Lk 5:4). At times, we may feel we do nothing worthwhile, or, even feel we go backwards. But these pessimistic impressions originate in calculations, which are extremely human, or in the bad image some media malevolently likes to give of us. The hidden reality that makes no noise is this constant work we are doing together, impelled by the force of the Saint Spirit.