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 see the signs that are shown in our time and age and to recognize in them the nearness of the Kingdom of God. The invitation is for us to fix our gaze on the fig tree and other trees —"Consider the fig tree and all the other trees" (Lk 21:29)—and to focus our attention on what we perceive happening in them: "you see for yourselves and know that summer is now near" (Lk 21:30). The fig trees were beginning to bud. The shoots were beginning to emerge. It wasn't just the expectation of the flowers or the fruit that would appear; it was also the forecast of summer, in which all the trees "begin to bud."

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.” That living Word that shows us summer as a sign of nearness and exuberance of light is Light itself: “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).

Jesus’ communication with the Father was perfect; and everything He received from the Father, He gave to us, communicating with us in the same way. Thus, the nearness of the Kingdom of God—which manifests God’s free initiative in coming to meet us—should move us to recognize the Kingdom’s proximity, so that we too may communicate with the Father through the Word of the Lord—Verbum Domini—recognizing in all of this the fulfillment of the Father’s promises in Christ Jesus.

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.