

Friday 34th in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 21,29-33): Jesus said to his disciples, «Look at the fig tree and all the trees. As soon as their buds sprout, you know that summer is already near. In the same way, as soon as you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I tell you, this generation will not pass away, until all this has happened: heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away».

«As soon as you see these things happening, you 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 epoch, 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 already 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: «As you see these things happening, you 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 to our encounter, 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.

«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): «Look at the fig tree and all the trees. As soon as their buds sprout, you know that summer is already 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 what is therein said as said by us, here and now: «This generation will not pass away, until all this has happened» (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 danel. 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 John Paul II, said it at the beginning of the third millennium: «Duc in altum» (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.