

Saturday of the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 21:34-36): Jesus said to his disciples: “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.”

“Be vigilant at all times and pray”

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
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Today, the last day of Ordinary Time, Jesus clearly warns us about the fate of our pass through life. Should we stubbornly insist on living imbued by the immediacy of our worldly cares, the last day of our earthly existence will come upon us so suddenly that the very blindness of our own greediness will prevent us from recognizing God Himself, who will come (do you remember we are just passersby here?) to take us towards the divine intimacy of His Infinite Love. Something that simliarily happens to a spoiled child: he is so entertained by “his” toys that he ends up by forgetting his parents' tenderness and his friends' company. And when he finally realizes what he has done, he disconsolately wails because of his unexpected loneliness.

The antidote Jesus offers us is equally clear: “Be vigilant at all times and pray” (Lk 21:36). To watch and to pray... The same advise He gave his apostles the night He was betrayed. The prayer has an admirable prophecy component, often forgotten when preaching, that is, to switch from mere “seeing” to “watching” the quotidian in its deepest and crudest reality. As Evagrius Ponticus wrote: “Just as sight is the most worthy of the senses, so also is prayer the most divine of the virtues.” The classics of spirituality name it “supernatural vision”, i.e. to look through God's eyes. Or what equally amounts to, knowing the Truth: about God, about the world, about oneself. The prophets were not only those who “preceded what was about to

happen”, but also those who knew how to interpret their present time in its exact measurement, scope and density. The end result: they knew, with God's help, how to redress history.

So often we complaint about our world situation. —Where shall all this lead us to? Today, is the last day of Ordinary Time, it is also a day of definite resolutions. Maybe it is about time that someone may make up his mind and give up his present drunkenness while starting to work for a better future. —Would you like this someone to be you? Then, cheer up! And may God bless you!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Dear brothers, we must endure and persevere if we are to attain the truth and freedom we have been allowed to hope for” (Saint Cyprian)

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“Nostalgia for slavery is nestled in our heart, because it is seemingly more reassuring than freedom, which is far more risky. How we like being captivated by lots of fireworks, beautiful at first glance but which in reality last but a few seconds.” (Francis)

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“(…) The Letter to the Galatians contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit: ‘Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry ... drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.’ (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 1,852)