Friday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel text (*Mt* 11:16-19): Jesus spoke to the crowds: “To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, ‘He is possessed by a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, ‘Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is vindicated by her works.”

“To what shall I compare this generation?”

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
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Today, we should be distraught before the Lord’s sigh: “To what shall I compare this generation?” (Mt 11:16). Jesus is stunned because of our heart, too often nonconforming to His will and ungrateful. We are never fulfilled, we are complaining all the time. We even dare to blame Him for the things that disturb us.

But “wisdom is vindicated by her works” (Mt 11:19): it suffices to just look at the Christmas mystery. But, what about us? How is our faith? Could it be that our complaints are actually harboring the nonexistence of our own reply? This is a very appropriate query for the time of Advent!

God comes to our encounter, but man —especially the present-day man— hides out from Him. Some, as Herod, are really afraid of Him. Others are even disturbed by His simple presence, as we read in John’s Gospel: “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” (Jn 19:15). Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said that Jesus “is the God-who-comes”, and we look like "the-man-who-goes away." And John wrote: “He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him” (Jn 1:11).

Why do we run away? Because of our lack of meekness. Saint John the Baptist recommended that we "dwindle", and the Church reminds us to do exactly that every time Advent comes. We must, therefore, become as little children to be able to understand and receive the "Little God." He appears before us with the humility of his swaddling-clothes: never before a “God-wrapped-in-swaddling clothes” had been preached! We project a ridiculous image before God when we try to conceal ourselves with pretexts and dishonest explanations. Already at the dawn of humanity, Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the snake..., centuries have passed and we remain just the same.

Jesus-God, however, is coming: in the cold and the poverty of Bethlehem He neither admonished nor rebuked us. On the contrary! He began to load His small shoulders with the weight of all our faults.

Should we, then, be afraid of Him? Will our apologies be truly worthy before this "Little-God"? Benedict XVI wrote: “God’s sign is the Baby: we learn to live with Him and to practice with Him that humility of renunciation that belongs to the very essence of love.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Therefore, God, seeing the world falling into ruin because of fear, continuously acts to recall it with love, invite it back by grace, hold it tight in charity, and embrace it with affection.” (St. Peter Chrysologus)

- “God offers to humanity, which no longer has time for him, further time, in order to set out anew on a journey to rediscover the meaning of hope. God loves us and for this very reason expects that we return to him, that we open our hearts to his Love.” (Benedict XVI)

- ““No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man” (Jn 3:13). Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the `Father's house’ (Jn 14:2), to God's life and happiness. Only Christ can open to man such access.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 661)

Other comments

“But wisdom is vindicated by her works.”

Fr. Pere GRAU i Andreu
(Les Planes, Barcelona, Spain)

Today we realize that very often we have to go to funerals. But... we rarely think about our own funeral. It is like a play of the subconscious that postpones sine die (indefinitely) one's own death.

The very contemplation of the rhythm of nature that surrounds us also reminds us of this fact. We deduce that —in a certain way— we are not so distant from a plant, from a living being... We are subjected, whether we like it or not, to the same natural law of the creatures that surround us. With the important difference of the origin of our life, of life in the image and likeness of God, with projection of eternity.

The entire Advent is informed by this idea. The Lord comes with great splendor to visit his people, with peace, communicating eternal life. It's a wake-up call: “But wisdom is vindicated by her works.” (Mt 11:19). Let us have a receptive attitude before the Lord!

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths” (Mk 1:3), is announced to us on the Second Sunday of Advent (cycle B). Be vigilant with social behaviors! He comes to tell us today. It is as if He were saying:

"Do not hinder God's loving communication."

We have to polish our character. We have to rebuild our way of doing things. Everything that, ultimately, distorts our responsibility: pride, ambition, vengeance, hardness of heart, etc. Those attitudes that make us like gods of power in the world, without wanting to recognize that we are not the masters of the world. We are a small part of the long history of Humanity.

John's disciples experienced purification from their errors. We, the disciples of Jesus, our Friend, can live the insurmountable experience of purification from all that is sin, with the hope of eternal life: another Christmas!

Let us renew our dialogue with Him. Let us make our prayer of hope and love, without paying attention to the mundane noise that surrounds us.