

23. December 2019

“The day of the Lord”

Mal 3,1-4.23-24

'Look, I shall send my messenger to clear a way before me. And suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his Temple; yes, the angel of the covenant, for whom you long, is on his way, says Yahweh Sabaoth. Who will be able to resist the day of his coming? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like fullers' alkali. He will take his seat as refiner and purifier; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they can make the offering to Yahweh with uprightness. The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will then be acceptable to Yahweh as in former days, as in the years of old. 'Look, I shall send you the prophet Elijah before the great and awesome Day of Yahweh comes. He will reconcile parents to their children and children to their parents, to forestall my putting the country under the curse of destruction.'

The day of the Lord will come.

Now we are preparing ourselves for the feast of the birth of the Lord, but in the background of this text the end of the times will always light up when the Lord will come again. While we celebrate and bring to mind again and again the unique birth of the Lord, it will be different at the second coming of Christ, for he will appear for judgment.

With the first coming of the Lord the year of God's grace is proclaimed (*cf. Lk 4,18-19*) and all men are to experience the goodness of the Lord, to repent and to receive the forgiveness of sins. We do not know how long this year of grace will last, since we also do not know when our Lord will return. But as long as this year of grace continues, the Church is given the task of evangelization to prepare humanity for the second coming of Christ!

How would the Lord like to find his Church when he returns?

He has always made it clear to us! He wants to find us watching and praying, preaching the Gospel and serving our neighbour. Perhaps in these days before Christmas we can pay special attention to the Mother of the Lord, whom we encounter in the texts. We have already contemplated her yes to the will of God, the praise of God through her mouth and her life. We can add the service to her

pregnant relative Elizabeth, and so we find the essential elements that awaken us to the coming of the Lord: adoration of God, doing the will of the Lord, proclaiming his great deeds and service to others!

In this way we could say that the Lord wants to find his Church like Mary, the prototype, or we could express it in this way: The church should become Marian! Then she would endure the Day of the Lord, because the Church will also experience her purification and there are some signs that this purification is taking place in a special way!

In our text it is said that the sons of Levi will be cleansed like gold and silver, then they will offer right sacrifices to the Lord.

The right ones, perhaps one can also say the complete sacrifices, are therefore only possible after the purification. We can certainly understand this in the spiritual sense that the right sacrifice of our life only happens when our heart is cleansed. Only then all is eliminated and overcome - or let us say it more cautiously - what still stands in our way in our relationship with God is largely purified.

If we look back at the Old Covenant and compare the sacrifice there with the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, then we can easily understand that the sacrifice in the Old Covenant was not yet complete and prepared for the sacrifice of the Lord, which only then is the complete sacrifice before God!

Here we can build a bridge to our spiritual way. As long as we are not yet cleansed, our sacrifices, that is, our devotion, are still imperfect! But if we have already gone through purification processes, then we can offer another quality of sacrifices to the Lord, because then the Holy Spirit can work even more intensively in us!

For this purification of the heart, we are invited to be formed by the Blessed Mother, because she had a pure heart from birth and kept it in her life. The spiritual experience shows that her formation for us is consistent and at the same time mild!

Let us ask the Lord to purify our hearts so that we can endure the day of the Lord!