

15. November 2020

“The Watchfulness of the Sons of Light”

1 Thess 5:1-6

About times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you for you are well aware in any case that the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is' that sudden destruction falls on them, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there is no escape. But you, brothers, do not live in the dark, that the Day should take you unawares like a thief. No, you are all children of light and children of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober.

As the liturgical year draws to a close, the texts increasingly speak of the return of Christ, of the last things. This is also the case today. The return of Jesus is preparing itself, and it is only recognisable to those who approach it who are awoken. It is similar to death. We can virtually exclude it from life, (want to) overlook it or consciously approach it. If we do the latter - and not only on the very last stretch of the way - then we have become awake and live more consciously every day.

On the whole, the proclamation of the Gospel seems very little oriented towards the return of Christ, even though we hear the words every day at Holy Mass: “*We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.*”

When the proclamation of the return of the Lord and the so-called “last things” are withdrawn, life loses a certain eschatological tension. The following of Christ is then easily oriented primarily to the earthly realm and does not really work in a targeted manner. This could be the first reason for a certain “drowsiness”. The regularity of the days that pass envelops us, and it can easily happen that a false sense of security arises, since it comes more from the nature of man than from his security in God.

This year the corona event with its effects breaks the usual sequence of our days. Suddenly many things are completely different. For many people, the life they have been used to up to now is being strongly changed, the freedom to travel is almost completely lost, economic hardship is arising, people are supposed to put on masks and an absurd spectrum is forming before our eyes. The churches are

sometimes included in this masquerade or even closed, freedom of religion and assembly is restricted, Holy Communion - quite a few bishops ordered without the authority to do so - is only to be given in hand. Doctors point out that the risk factor for oral communion is no higher at all, and yet the many bishops still stick to hand communion. Scientists question the usefulness of compulsory masks and even point out harmful effects if used extensively.

Who could have thought of this a year ago? What are these signs? Today's text says that sudden destruction is coming over people. Does this plague and its effects not have signs of both suddenness and perdition?

We can, of course, simply consider all these developments as normal consequences of the pandemic with appropriate protective measures.

But is that all we should think about?

Should we not better ask what the Lord is trying to tell us? After all, nothing happens without His approval. Is this an apocalyptic sign, because after all, it affects virtually the whole world? What is the right answer to an event that, from one day to the next, as it were, determines the lives of many people? Does the pandemic bring in the thief who uses this circumstance to determine our lives from now on?

Vigilance and sobriety are called for by the "Sons of Light", as opposed to drowsiness. That is why we must ask these questions, even if we do not immediately know the answer. It is very strange if we want to hide God from such a worldwide event and only look for naturalistic explanations. If God allows such a plague, then he has his reasons and also his plans with it.

What must surely come first is true conversion. The fruitfulness of human life is bound to the keeping of God's commandments. The terrible sins of mankind cry out to heaven. Let us only think of the continued killing of innocent children without considering all the other insults to God at this time.

Confronting and dealing with such an epidemic urgently raises the question of the priorities of life.

In other words, God calls people to repentance through such events. Before our eyes the self-evident things in life break down. Everything is no longer safe. Neither can life be built on individual liberties, nor on the reliability of

governments. Even the Rock of Peter seems fragile. Above the world is the threat that the pandemic can only be overcome through strict measures.

What will tomorrow bring?

Will be a future freedom of movement, shopping etc. only with vaccination certificates, digital surveillance? Will we just go along with all this?

The only valid answer may be to turn to God unconditionally and entrust our lives, our families, our communities, our nations, indeed the whole world to him. In doing so, we can grow in confidence that the Lord will guide us through these purifications, so that people will seek him and the Church will be freed from what does not belong to her and will regain her beauty as we can see in the Virgin Mary.

It is not natural optimism that will carry us through these difficult times, but the hand of the Lord and we still have to prepare ourselves for another journey!