

24. November 2020

“The time of harvest”

Rev 14:14-19

Now in my vision I saw a white cloud and, sitting on it, one like a son of man with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the sanctuary and shouted at the top of his voice to the one sitting on the cloud, 'Ply your sickle and reap: harvest time has come and the harvest of the earth is ripe.' Then the one sitting on the cloud set his sickle to work on the earth, and the harvest of earth was reaped. Another angel, who also carried a sharp sickle, came out of the temple in heaven, and the angel in charge of the fire left the altar and shouted at the top of his voice to the one with the sharp sickle, 'Put your sickle in, and harvest the bunches from the vine of the earth; all its grapes are ripe.' So the angel set his sickle to work on the earth and harvested the whole vintage of the earth and put it into a huge winepress, the winepress of God's anger.

It is a great illusion to believe that people can ignore or violate the commandments of God, but never have to account for them. Without doubt, God's goodness and mercy are immeasurable and God is ready to forgive all sins if man repents and converts. But the Lord has not given us the commandments to override them Himself. The present tendency to no longer want to see sin as sin is devastating. It confuses man, and he is less and less able to distinguish good from evil - a basic distinction that is essential for all people to be able to truly orient themselves in this world. If for man is good only what is useful for him and pleases his feelings, then the wonderful world of God's values can no longer be grasped and responded to. We become just as disorientated when - as is the case today - the gender of man in the so-called gender ideology is no longer to be determined by biological preconditions, but by our own choice! The absurdity of such notions hardly seems surpassable!

Judgment is given to the Son of Man and he will judge the world. He will not do so without giving man the opportunity to repent and without his comprehensive justice, which recognises and knows everything! Nothing remains hidden from him, everything is revealed before his eyes.

This is a great joy and consolation for us human beings, and this knowledge, which clings to the goodness of God in all circumstances, will then give us light even in

those moments that are beyond our comprehension. It will become an adherence to God himself, who alone is to become our security - especially in the hours of judgement!

So the knowledge of God's judgement at the end of times is not something that must make us afraid, but in many ways it should wake us up. It shows us the seriousness of our decisions. Just as every good deed is recorded in the Book of the Lamb, and thus belongs to the good harvest, so God is also aware of man's transgressions. While the lives of believers are supposed to increase the praise of God on earth, the evil deeds darken the light of the Lord. While good deeds multiply under the constant action of God's deeds, the life of sin can also spread its devastation. Therefore, vigilance is so necessary that we do not lose our zeal for good.

But waking up is not only for the salvation of one's own soul, for there is the dimension that a person can be lost forever! This truth is being proclaimed less and less today because it is felt that it cannot be reconciled with God's mercy. But if one does not become aware of it, the zeal to save souls is weakened. Certainly one can say that one should do good for the sake of good and avoid evil for the sake of evil! But awareness of the ultimate consequences of evil increases our vigilance, makes our prayer more pleading and our concern for others more fervent!

The knowledge of the last things needs the appropriate proclamation. Without it, the salt becomes stale (*cf. Mt 5:13*) and we are in danger of not spending our lives vigilantly enough.

It is helpful to first ask the Lord Himself to cleanse us from all weeds, to execute His judgement on us already now - in this hour of grace. We can always hurry to the throne of the Lamb and know that He is waiting for us with great love to forgive us and lift us up (*cf. Heb 4:16*). Strengthened by His grace, we then should carry into our praying hearts especially those who are in danger to get lost, and pray as the Angel of Portugal taught: "*O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.*"