

14. December 2020

Come, Lord Jesus Maranatha!
(Part 2)
“Watchfulness”

“As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept them all away. This is what it will be like when the Son of man comes. Then of two men in the fields, one is taken, one left; of two women grinding at the mill, one is taken, one left. 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.’ (Mt 24:37-44)

If I were to choose a word that should be one of the dominant terms in relation to the return of Jesus, I would choose the word watchfulness. Vigilance is the overcoming of habit and sleepiness which so easily surrounds us human beings. It means that the soul focuses on the essential, lives in the “kairos”.

The very fact that our earthly life is limited by death teaches us how important vigilance is. If one has understood in faith that this life is less than the blink of an eye compared to eternity and that we may be as close to God in eternity as we have responded to His love here on earth, then life takes on a fruitful tension: now is the time in which we may work for the kingdom of God, now is the time in which we can gather treasures for heaven (*cf. Mt 6:20*), now is the time in which we prove our love to God, day after day! We only have this time - it is entrusted to us by God and in Him the time is ours!

The above text first describes man's interweaving with natural life. It is so strong that nothing can really wake him up to understand the signs of the times. Nothing can move him to perceive the true situation of life and to respond accordingly. That is why the coming of the Son of Man will not be perceived by signs. Man is completely unprepared.

There is a vigilance that watches for the dangers that threaten man and takes the appropriate attitude: *“You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had*

known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house.”

There is also a watchfulness of love: those souls who wait for the coming of the Lord and are busy working full of zeal in His vineyard. They are already fully awakened to the love of Christ and are even able to hasten His coming.

“If all this is resolved in this way: How holy and devout you must then live, awaiting and hastening the coming of the day of God!” (2 Pet 3:11-12)

In relation to the spiritual life, which receives an additional dynamic through a living expectation of the Lord's return, both attitudes are important. They complement each other.

The watchfulness of love, which means an increasing presence of the Holy Spirit in us, becomes very sensitive to the desires of the Lord and is also careful to carry out in the spirit of piety the respective tasks which the Lord has set us in life. (duties of Life)

However, a vigilance inspired by the Spirit of God also perceives the dangers that surround man. The great trust in God, which grows through love, is by no means blind. It does not lead to a trusting attitude of naivety, which is not able to assess situations, but to looking at things from God's point of view.

Vigilance is therefore neither a fearful tenseness and an overestimation of evil, nor an optimistic “everything will be alright”.

With regard to the return of the Lord, which - as mentioned above - we can even hasten through love, we know about the signs that precede the return of Jesus. They are sufficiently described to us. The Lord even draws our attention to them specifically so that we can perceive his coming in this way.

So this week we are invited listen carefully to what the Lord says about his coming and receive it with vigilance, because the Lord is near.

Come, Lord Jesus Maranatha!