

23. February 2022

Seize the present day

Jas 4:13-17

Well now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we are off to this or that town; we are going to spend a year there, trading, and make some money.' You never know what will happen tomorrow: you are no more than a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears. Instead of this, you should say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we shall still be alive to do this or that.' But as it is, how boastful and loud - mouthed you are! Boasting of this kind is always wrong. Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and does not do it commits a sin.

What will happen tomorrow? A question that some people worry about, while others do not think about it. Still others make plans, without even considering the possibility that everything may turn out differently from what they had imagined, and without questioning whether these plans correspond to God's plans.

Properly applied, the warning of the Apostle James in today's reading does not mean that one should waver in one's sensible plans; rather it means that, in the end, only from God comes the ultimate certainty of our existence and the execution of our plans. So we must always leave a door open for God to act. His plans may indeed be different and we do not yet know them. This attitude - which goes beyond just paying lip service to an expression such as "God willing" - unites us to God, wanting to submit everything to his blessing and to his wise Providence.

We must follow our Lord's advice to concentrate on the present day: *"Do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own"* (Mt 6:34). Indeed, the more I strive to fulfil God's Will concretely in this day, the more I will be preparing for the next day, if God grants me to live it. From this results a great concentration and we receive a growing assurance in the ways of the Lord: "Today is the day for me to overcome; today I want to walk in the footsteps of the Lord; today I want to live as if tomorrow the Lord might call me to the eternal abode..."

Another exhortation from today's reading calls us to lead our lives responsibly. Thus the Apostle says: *"Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and does not do it commits a sin"*. These are the so-called "sins of omission", which can be very serious. In fact, the good is there for us to do, and when we do it, our hearts are shaped by it, so that God's goodness can be reflected in our lives.

What good can I do today? This would be a question that could mark our lives. If we put it into practice, we will not only be able to refer to our immediate environment, but it will cover many situations we are confronted with. Certainly we cannot help everyone in everything, but we must be attentive to the opportunities that present themselves to do good.

The more naturally we do it, with God's grace, the more it will become part of us, so that it will also become easier and easier for us.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit that we do not miss opportunities to do good! In this way we will be able to give glory to God, reflecting Him who is the source of all good (Mt 5:16). Moreover, we will also serve the other person and help ourselves on the path of following Christ.