

13. November 2022

The End of Time

Lk 21:5-11

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, he said, 'All these things you are staring at now -- the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be destroyed.' And they put to him this question, 'Master,' they said, 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that it is about to take place?' But he said, 'Take care not to be deceived, because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the one" and "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be terrified, for this is something that must happen first, but the end will not come at once.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines in various places; there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven.'

It is essential that the Church reminds us again and again of the End Times. We are heading towards the Return of Christ. Although no one knows the day or the hour (Mt 24:36), there is no doubt that the time will come, just as the time of our death will surely come.

In many passages, Sacred Scripture clearly teaches us that there is no natural evolution towards good, no matter how much speculation there may be in this direction. We can see this in human history. Certainly we have made some progress, especially with regard to the external circumstances of life and coexistence. Quite a bit of scientific knowledge has contributed to an improvement in living conditions. However, when we look, for example, at the barbarity of abortion, at the spreading euthanasia, at sexual perversion and many other things, we must soberly conclude that man does not necessarily change for the better in a merely natural process. Only under the influence of grace is he capable of overcoming those destructive abysses that imprison him.

In this sense, it is foolish to place our hope in persons, in political systems, in human ideas, in an evolutionary process of history that tends by itself to the positive or other similar constructs.

We can have hope thanks to the goodness and love of God, who never tires of calling us back home to His Kingdom. We can hope because divine love is not unstable like our human love, because God keeps his promises, because the Father's love does not give up in the face of our estrangement, but seeks us out without ceasing.

It is this hope in God's unchanging goodness that must prevent us from despairing in the face of the terrible events that Jesus foretells in today's Gospel. The very idea that the glorious Temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed must have been almost inconceivable to the disciples. The Lord announces wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, terrible events... False prophets will come to confuse people and great signs will appear in the sky.

The Lord does not hide from us the catastrophes that await us. The return of Christ will be preceded by terrible events. If we do not close our eyes, we will realize that much of what was announced here has already taken place. In fact, everything that the Lord makes us see in today's Gospel has already happened, and other events may yet befall us...

Therefore, we cannot announce a world that becomes harmonious and peaceful only thanks to the efforts of individuals. Both Sacred Scripture and the course of history teach us otherwise. As right as it is to work to make our world better and more just, it is a mistake to expect this to happen in the first instance thanks to the work of man. To want to see only the good always distorts reality as much as if we always and at all times detect only evil.

We must internalize biblical realism! We can hope for an improvement as long as man corresponds to God's grace and his heart is transformed.

There will be true peace only when we know God as He truly is and accept the Redemption in Christ! "Peace is only in God" - as Brother Nicholas, a saint from Switzerland, used to say.

We must warn that there can be a false peace, which excludes God. Attempts are also being made to involve religions in efforts to achieve peace, but unfortunately at the cost of the all-encompassing nature of the Lord's message.

It will not be political institutions that will bring true peace! It would be more important to warn against them than to demand obedience from such entities, for their anti-Christian character, which often manifests itself, cannot be ignored. Nor could a "universal religion" create true peace. On the contrary, it would only eclipse the Reign of Christ.

So, let us not be deceived and let us place all our hope in God. He will sustain us in all the terrible events that will precede the Return of Christ, so that they cannot paralyze us. If we hear of these threatening scenarios, let us turn to the Lord, in whose nearness we can take refuge even in tribulations, in the certainty that Christ will come. Yes, come Lord Jesus! Maranatha!