

22. November 2022

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 simply live with their backs turned to God's commandments or turn against them, without ever having to give an account for it. No doubt God's goodness and mercy are immeasurable, and He is ready to forgive all sins as soon as we repent and convert. But it is impossible for God to have given us the commandments and then Himself take away their force!

The current trend of no longer wanting to see sin as sin is disastrous. It confuses the person, so that he becomes less and less able to distinguish evil from good. And this is a basic discernment, which is essential for every person, in order to have a true orientation in this world. If he only considers good to be what is useful to him and what pleases his feelings, he will no longer be able to grasp the wonderful world of God's values, nor respond to them. We are just as disoriented when, today, gender ideology pretends to tell us that sex is not biologically determined; rather, it is a choice one makes. The absurdity of such ideas seems almost insurmountable!

To the Son of man is given the judgment (cf. Jn 5:27) and He will judge the orb of the earth. But He does not do so without first giving us the opportunity to be converted. His justice is all-embracing and all-knowing! Nothing is hidden from Him; everything

is revealed to His eyes (cf. Heb 4:13). This is a great joy and a deep consolation for us! And this certainty of firmly believing in the goodness of God in all circumstances will give us light also in those situations that seem incomprehensible to us. Thus, we cling to God Himself, who will become our only security, precisely in the hours of Judgment. The awareness that God will judge at the End of Time should not fill us with fear, but awaken us in many ways. In fact, the Judgment shows us the seriousness of our decisions. Just as every good act is recorded in the Book of the Lamb and does not fear the sickle of the Lord because it is a good fruit; so also the transgressions of men are known to God. While the good deeds of the faithful increase the praise of God in this world, evil deeds dim the light of the Lord. Just as good works multiply under the influence of grace, so too the life of sin can continue to proliferate its destruction. This is why vigilance is so necessary, so that we do not lose our fervor in good works.

But the awakening is not only in relation to the salvation of our own souls, but also to the awareness that there is a real danger that other people will be eternally damned. Nowadays this truth is less and less announced, because it is believed that it does not agree with the mercy of God. But if one is not aware of this reality, one's zeal for the salvation of souls is weakened. Of course, we should do good simply because it is good; and avoid evil because it is evil... But keeping in mind the ultimate consequence of evil will increase our vigilance, make our prayer more intense and our concern for others more fervent.

Knowledge of the ultimate realities also requires their proclamation. Without this dimension, salt becomes bland (cf. Mt 5:13) and we run the risk of living without sufficient vigilance.

In the first instance, we should ask the Lord Himself to cleanse the field of our soul from all weeds and plead with Him that His judgment on us be carried out now, while we live in the "hour of grace". We can always come to the Throne of the Lamb, knowing 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 are to welcome into our prayerful hearts especially those who are in eternal danger, and pray as the angel of Portugal taught the children of Fatima: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, deliver us from the fires of hell, bring to heaven all souls, especially those most in need of your infinite mercy."