

16. March 2023

LENTEN ITINERARY

Day 23: "Listen to the prophets"

Today's reading, taken from the Book of Jeremiah, reminds us to listen to the prophets. God speaks to us through them, to guide us back to the straight path. We know that, since He sent His own Son into the world, God speaks to us through Himself (Heb 1:1-2) and with the voice of the Church; however, it would be wrong to exclude the prophetic dimension altogether now. The Lord says to Jeremiah:

"So you will tell them all this, but they will not listen to you; you will call them, but they will not answer you." Then you are to say to them, "This is the nation that will neither listen to the voice of Yahweh its God nor take correction. Sincerity is no more, it has vanished from their mouths" (Jer 7:27-28).

Already in the meditation of 1 March, in the context of the story of Nineveh, we spoke of the need for conversion in order to prevent the consequences of transgressions from falling on people. Today's text again reminds us of this with emphasis, raising the problem of not listening to the prophetic voice that comes to our aid at God's command.

Hand in hand with the proclamation of the Gospel, the Church should emphatically point out to men that the plagues we experience today are permitted by God, because many people no longer observe the divine commandments.

The decisive thing is that men should be converted! This is why this call to conversion should resound "from every quarter" (cf. Lk 12:3), especially from the mouths of the shepherds of the Church.

Is this happening? No!

Only very few would dare to relate the present plagues to the sins of the world and the faults of the Church. Such would be regarded as "prophets of calamity", threatening and confusing the faithful. Today we are grateful to the prophets of the Old Covenant for having spoken the truth. But, in their time, they were often unwelcome.

Thus the Lord says to the Prophet Isaiah: *"Shout for all you are worth, do not hold back, raise your voice like a trumpet. To my people proclaim their rebellious acts, to the House of Jacob, their sins"* (Is 58:1).

But, if there is no conversion of human kind, the misfortune that threatens to befall the world can no longer be avoided or mitigated.

If today the voice of the Church no longer resounds with authority, then it is especially advisable to have recourse to prophetic voices. These existed not only in the times of the Old Covenant, but also in the history of the Church.

I would like to mention two examples.

The first is well known: it is the Message of the Virgin Mary at Fatima. In the year 1917, she had warned that communism would spread, starting from Russia; and she had asked the Church and the faithful to perform certain acts to prevent this from happening. But, evidently, her instructions were not observed as she had requested, so that communism was able to spread like a devastating ulcer.

The second example I would like to point out is very topical. For some time now, the Child Jesus has been appearing in the German town of Sievernich. He invites people to deepen their faith and speaks about the dangers that threaten to befall mankind. At the same time, he gives concrete instructions about the acts of penance that should be carried out in order to avoid a war.

The messages that really come from heaven should be made known officially, so that they find a place in the lives of the faithful. This would help to arouse their fervour to do everything in their power to avert an impending disaster. But, as a rule, they remain only in small circles, which welcome and put into practice these instructions from heaven.

So we see that the Heavenly Church does not remain silent if it sees humanity threatened.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/24/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2021/03/11/>