

24. October 2023

The vigilance of a Christian

Lk 12: 35-38

'See that you have your belts done up and your lamps lit. Be like people waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. In truth I tell you, he will do up his belt, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch that he comes, or in the third, but blessed are those servants if he finds them ready.'

In this Gospel text, the Lord shows us clearly how we Christians should live, and it is essential that we put this attitude into practice in our daily lives. It is not in the first instance a watchfulness that results from a fear of forgetting something important (although this form of care is also valuable); but it is a watchfulness that springs from an awakened love. The Lord for whom we wait is not a Lord to be feared, but one to be longed for with all our heart, for His presence is the most beautiful thing we can find.

Here a nuptial love is manifested; that is, not only the love of a child for its father, but that which longs for the most intimate union with its Lord. And since this love awakens all that is in us, the Bridegroom can come at any hour and find us ready for Him.

Now, how can we achieve this watchfulness in love?

Let us try to understand the Lord's words in today's Gospel: „*See that you have your belts done up*“. This might indicate that we should not settle into the comfort of natural life or feel at home in the sensual world. This warm comfort lulls us to sleep, when we are too attached to it. We must learn to manage our natural life wisely, so that our spiritual vigilance is not reduced. This applies to everything that touches our senses, such as eating and sleeping, which must be integrated into our life but not made too important.

The Gospel goes on to say: “*See that you have your lamps lit*”. The Lord mentions burning lamps when speaking of good works, to which we are to be dedicated. He is

certainly referring to what we call the „works of mercy“. Love put into practice keeps our hearts on watch, particularly when we keep in mind that whatever we do, we do for Jesus. These works also include prayer and the care we must take in our spiritual journey, so that we do not miss the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who keeps us alive.

This watchful love requires us always to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord; to follow the promptings of the spirit of piety, which impels us to please God; to lay up treasures for heaven; to purify our conscience again and again, so that we remain attached to the Lord. In this way, our loving relationship with Him will grow ever closer, and we will no longer be merely servants awaiting the return of our Lord, but loving souls who long for the coming of the Bridegroom and are ever attentive to Him.