

20. July 2024

The Kingdom of God

Mt 12:14-21

In these days the Pharisees went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him. Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he cured them all but warned them not to make him known. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: Look! My servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul delights, I will send my Spirit upon him, and he will present judgement to the nations; he will not brawl or cry out, his voice is not heard in the streets, he will not break the crushed reed, or snuff the faltering wick, until he has made judgement victorious; in him the nations will put their hope.

The Pharisees plotted against Jesus to kill Him, and, as we know, in fact subsequently executed this plan, with the help of the civil power of the time.

We are confronted with the abysmal malice with which the Son of God is confronted; a malice that shows very clearly how far men can go in their contempt for God and for other people.

The schemer of these evil deeds is the one who was "a murderer from the beginning" (cf. Jn 8:44). History has witnessed enough examples of how the "murderer from the beginning" continues this bloody course of injustice against God and mankind to this day.

A couple of days ago (14 July), the world - and particularly France - celebrated the anniversary of the French Revolution, which some consider as the beginning of the Contemporary Age. At that time, in the name of the freedom of the people, it was intended to inaugurate a "new time". The guillotine carried out its murderous work. Many people were victims, including Carmelite nuns, who definitely could not be a threat to anyone, except those who felt threatened by the mere presence of God.

So, one tries to establish the "new" in order to overcome accumulated injustices, but one does it in such a way that one commits new injustices oneself, which are often even greater than the ones one wanted to fight.

What can result from this? A "vicious circle of death"!

The Lord reacts differently to injustice. He overcomes this "circle of death", and He also does it for us.

When He heard of the Pharisees' plan, He withdrew and continued His mission of proclamation and healing elsewhere... The threat was not a reason for Him to stop, but He continued to build up the Kingdom of God, which was present among people in His own Person.

He did not quarrel or shout... This prophecy of Isaiah about Jesus clearly indicates to us the way in which the Kingdom of the Lord is to expand. Without violence or coercion; without vengeance or retaliation.

It is a different kind of Kingdom, one that does not require shocking spectacles or displays of power. It lives by love and truth and overcomes evil by force of good (cf. Rom 12:21). This Kingdom is present wherever two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus (Mt 18:20); wherever the Lord of this Kingdom is heard... It is so permeated by good that evil is forced to give way, since it has no substance in itself.

The weak man is lifted up; the erring, enlightened; widows and orphans are cared for; the guilty are forgiven, if they repent.

This Kingdom is open to all who accept God's invitation, whether poor or rich! Only this Kingdom is capable of overcoming the kingdoms of this world, for in it there is no corruption, no illegitimate claims to power (cf. Mt 20:25-28), and the Lord of this Kingdom Himself washed the feet of His disciples (cf. Jn 13:4-5)!

But how can this Kingdom be extended among men?

It will only be possible through the supernatural light of God! It implies a true conversion of people and a new heart. An unconverted heart will fall again and again

into the "circle of death" and will not be able to get up, nor will it be able to practice all those virtues that are part of this Kingdom. An unconverted heart, which is not transformed under the influence of the Holy Spirit, will not be able to produce good and lasting fruits, in spite of all its efforts; and it will continue to seek supposed and perishable treasures, which, after all, rot.

For us Catholics, this Kingdom is glimpsed in the Heart of the Virgin Mary. It is a heart which belongs entirely to God and which has reached perfection through God's grace. It is a human heart, which is open to all humanity. In the Blessed Virgin Mary we can see God's original plan for man and what a reign of love consists of.

Only when the Kingdom of God becomes a reality, justice will win and the hope of the people will be fulfilled. Day by day we can work for this Kingdom, as soon as we listen to the Holy Spirit and follow His guidance.