

25. September 2024

Good advice

Prov 30,5-9

*Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you, and you be found a liar.
Two things I ask of thee;
deny them not to me before I die:
Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that is needful for me,
lest I be full, and deny thee,
and say, "Who is the Lord?"
or lest I be poor, and steal,
and profane the name of my God.*

The Word of God protects us and is our shield, because it shelters us in the truth and thus in the Lord Himself. Therefore, living in the truth not only makes us free (cf. Jn 8:32), but also, in a certain sense, indestructible. Every attack against the truth may appear to be successful, but in reality it suffers from an inner rot that will eventually bring everything down.

Let us think, for example, of so many ideologies, which wanted to offer solutions to many problems, but whose errors ended up being unmasked after having caused great devastation...

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that, before the Second Coming of Christ, there will be a "religious deception" which "will offer people an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth" (n. 675). But one will only fall into this deception if one is not firmly rooted in the Word of the Lord, if the light of His truth has not sufficiently penetrated us.

We can understand and assimilate the Word of God better and better; we can absorb it more deeply; but we do not need to improve it, as today's reading makes clear: "*Do not*

add to his words, lest he rebuke you, and you be found a liar." Nor can we reinterpret God's word to suit ourselves. St Paul warns us that " the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

When we reinterpret or relativise the Word of God and the authentic teaching of the Church, we leave the safe haven that the Word of God offers us, exposing ourselves in all our vulnerability to the enemy.

In some very questionable developments after the Second Vatican Council, it was optimistically believed that one could approach the world practically unprotected, that one could discover its values and enter into dialogue with everyone, embracing everything and opening the doors of the Church to all kinds of influences.

Monsignor Schneider, in his book "Christus vincit"[1], writes that

“The phrase about 'opening the windows' before and during the Council was a misleading illusion and caused confusion. The people understood it to mean that the spirit of an obviously unbelieving society was capable of transmitting values for the life of Christians. (...) In the course of the post-conciliar years, the partially opened floodgate gave way to a devastating tidal wave that caused enormous damage to doctrine, morals and liturgy. Today, the floods have reached a dangerous level. We are living at the height of a flood catastrophe.”

While it is true that we are to proclaim the Gospel to the world and that we can also appreciate, for example, the values practised or aspired to in other religions, this will only be possible to the extent that we are deeply anchored in the Word of God and that it is our refuge. This means realising that other religions cannot be in any way comparable to the Christian faith as a way of salvation, which would be a grave error that cannot be admitted.

Therefore, we cannot approach and address this world with an attitude of human and unrealistic optimism, but only at the Lord's command and sending, clothed in that spiritual armour suggested by Saint Paul in chapter 6 of the Letter to the Ephesians.

For example, when the modernist and unrealistic currents pretend to tell us that the Church and her teaching are not a bunker behind which we must hide, we must reply that those who go out into the world without the necessary protection are playing with fire and will end up being burned.

Putting on the armour does not mean isolating ourselves in fear; it means being aware of the situation in order to carry out the task entrusted to us in the world. Sacred Scripture warns us not to be like the world (cf. Rom 12:2), but to overcome it (cf. Jn 16:33).

We must therefore take refuge in the truth of the Word of God and beware of the "siren songs" of falsehoods and half-truths.

[1] Athanasius Schneider, *Christus vincit*. Faith Medienverlag 2019