

11. December 2024

Advent in apocalyptic times
Part IV: A light in the midst of darkness

In the midst of the darkness, a light shines... It is the shining light of faith, which guides us through the darkness that surrounds us today. Faith does not allow itself to be disturbed, but continues to praise the Coming of Christ, His Birth in Bethlehem. This same faith makes us vigilant not to overlook the signs of the times and to be prepared for the Return of Christ.

Sacred Scripture teaches us that the Second Coming of Christ will be preceded by the manifestation of the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:3). But, just as we do not know the day and hour of the Lord's return, we do not know when the Antichrist will appear, the one who will claim to sit on the throne of God (2 Thess 2:4). However, the present darkness with its antichristian character should shake us and awaken us to assume the place that God has assigned us in the spiritual combat.

The confusion of these times teaches us to place all our trust in God, instead of putting it in "princes, beings of dust who cannot save" - as the psalm tells us (Ps 145:3). God is the only safety! If we take this step of faith of abandoning ourselves to Him alone, we can be a great light for the faithful and free ourselves from the danger of seeking our security where we can never find it.

We, the faithful, must be courageous, taking advantage of and defending the beauty and clarity of our holy Catholic faith. For love of God and humankind we must bear witness. Humanity needs it to come into contact with the light that shone over Bethlehem when the Lord came into the world, and to find faith in Him.

In the spiritual combat that we are called to wage against the powers of darkness, it will help us to hold fast to these four pillars that point us in a clear direction:

a) Remain faithful to the authentic doctrine of the Church: This means that we must not allow ourselves to be infected by any modernism that obscures the clear light of doctrine.

b) To live and defend the moral teaching of the Church, without allowing it to be altered or relativized.

c) Remain faithful to the mission that Jesus entrusted to the Church, that is, to proclaim Him as the only Savior of humanity. In no dialogue with other religions can this truth be overlooked, if it is to be done according to the Will of God.

d) To strive sincerely for holiness.

If we internalize these four pillars and adhere to them, we will have our foundation firm on the rock of the Church and we will be able to confront the spirits of evil with the strength of the Lord.

The profound relationship with the Virgin Mary, the "victress in all battles" will show us exactly which virtues we must fight for, virtues that threaten the powers of evil in their arrogance: humility, purity, simplicity of heart...

From the Church's arsenal we can draw countless weapons: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Holy Rosary, the sacramental graces, the breviary, prayers of reparation, litanies, the prayer of the heart, among many others. All these treasures will serve us as spiritual weapons against the evil of darkness.

Even if we are a small flock - and we have to get used to this perspective in relation to the Church militant - this is the army of the Lamb, which remains on the Lord's side when He triumphs over all that opposes the loving reign of God. In view of the faithfulness and dedication of His own, the Lord will protect His Church and will not leave her at the mercy of her enemies, whether from without or from within. Even if the serpent raises his head in the midst of the Church, trying to proliferate the poison of false doctrine and praxis, he will be defeated by the one who will trample it underfoot (Gen 3:15). With patience and trust we will await her triumph.

The serious tone of these meditations is due to the gravity and apocalyptic dimension of the present time. Vigilance and joy complement each other well, and Sacred Scripture exhorts us again and again to sobriety and vigilance (1 Pet 5:8). We must not intoxicate our senses either with drink or with illusions of every kind. The Lord will guide and

sustain us in these times, and we are called to be faithful to Him until death (Rev 2:10).
"The joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh 8:10).