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"The King of hearts"

Lk 17:20-25

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, Jesus gave them this answer, 'The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, "Look, it is here! Look, it is there!" For look, the kingdom of God is among you.' He said to the disciples, 'A time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of man and will not see it. They will say to you, "Look, it is there!" or, "Look, it is here!" Make no move; do not set off in pursuit; for as the lightning flashing from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son of man when his Day comes. But first he is destined to suffer grievously and be rejected by this generation.

The Kingdom of God! Every day, in the Our Father prayer, we ask for its advent.... This Kingdom has a King, and it does not lack its Queen either. We all know them: it is the Lord Himself and His most loving Mother, whom we venerate as Queen!

In the Catholic Church, there are so-called "coronation ceremonies" on statues of the Lord or of the Virgin.... To non-Catholics - and perhaps to some Catholics as well - this may seem strange, and perhaps they see it as one of those peculiar pious practices of Catholicism.... However, upon transcending to its true meaning, it may be understood that the intention is to proclaim the Reign of Christ, expressing it in the visible act of the crowning of a statue or in a special consecration...

Logically, such an act must go hand in hand with the corresponding interior attitude, because the Reign of God is not established merely through exterior gestures. In the Person of Jesus this Kingdom has already come, and all those who adhere to Christ are called to walk its path. Not only do we bow our knees before the Lord, in a gesture that the true King deserves, but we also give Him our hearts.

As Jesus Himself declared before Pilate, His Kingdom is not of this world (cf. Jn 18:36). Nor did the Lord command His disciples to resort to arms to expel the Romans from Israel, so that He could be crowned King.

Rather, the Lord taught His disciples the way of love and truth. Whoever puts this into practice already lives in the Kingdom of God, and when God dwells in our hearts and can rule in them, His Kingdom is being established in us. If this were to happen also with the "kings of this world" - that is, with those in power - then earthly realities would also be increasingly penetrated by the spirit of the Kingdom of God. If God's message were to reach humankind and they were to be converted, the Kingdom of God would expand more and more and the Lord would be revered as the true King. How beautiful to imagine this!

But we must admit that, in this world, things are not like that, nor can we pretend to establish a Paradise on Earth. Rather, our mission is to bear witness to the King of hearts, living as redeemed children, because, deep down, there is nothing that people crave so much as a Father who truly loves them.

Therefore, we have the responsibility to make this Kingdom visible to other people, so that they experience it tangibly through our love. Let us remember that one of the convincing signs for the pagan world was the love that the early Christians had for one another: "See how they love one another! See how they are ready to die for one another" (Tertullian - 2nd Century).

At the End Times, Jesus will return visibly on the clouds of heaven. We must wait for Him, and not go after anyone who tries to establish a Paradise in this world. All these attempts have failed, and often in a bloody way! In the End Times, also the Antichrist will present himself with such pretensions and with perverted omens.... Perhaps he will try to establish a kind of universal religion, to satisfy the religious needs of the people. But, in the end, he will try to expel Christ from our hearts, in order to place himself on the throne.

Therefore, the Kingdom of Christ must be deeply sown and rooted in us, so that no deceitful voice can seduce us and eclipse the presence of the Lord in our hearts. Let us allow the Word of God to grow deep roots in us, let us faithfully receive the holy sacraments, let us not neglect the path of holiness and let us hold firmly to the authentic doctrine of the Church. God will protect and guide us, even when times are dark!