



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT. CYCLE C

Luke 21:25 -28, 34-36

Paris (France), SR. MARÍA FABIOLA VELÁSQUEZ MAYA, November 28, 2021.

I sincerely believe that, both for you and for me, today's Gospel from St. Luke, announcing the end times, just when we are at the beginning of Advent, in a period in which we are preparing for Christmas, is a particularly strange, dramatic, even incomprehensible announcement.

Very spontaneously, we would have expected a text like that of Annunciation of the Angel to Mary, or something that would have put us in preparation for the happy occasion that is approaching. We would have liked a Gospel text that sounded like an announcement or a Facebook post that said, "Do you know that Mary is pregnant and will be soon...? Let us rejoice...".

But, instead, Luke throws us to the other end of his Gospel, just before the passion narratives, awakening in us deep feelings of suffering, tension, betrayal.... uncertainties of all kinds that make us feel great fear, because all this underlines the existence of a very fragile, destabilized world, in which it is impossible to find points of reference.

In fact, it is not necessary to make a great effort of adaptation, because we have the impression that all those phrases in the future tense, such as "there will be signs, men will die of fear, powers will be shaken", abruptly describe the time in which we live. There is no need to imagine the end of a distant world, we are already in that world, it is our world!

However, if we look back at history, we see that generations before us have found themselves in the same catastrophic situations. They have seen the limits of so many "kings of the sun", desperate for better days on many levels, deeply disappointed by false justice, worried about the future of their children, deceived by systems or simply and more currently, discovering the ephemeral vanity of the glory of the powerful or of stars of all kinds: stars fall, the climate

deteriorates, certainties disappear to such an extent that sometimes it becomes very difficult to know who can really be trusted!

But here, in this context, in this very place, the Lord encourages us by saying:

"Lift up your heads, your salvation is near!"

We might be tempted, like many disillusioned people, to say, "Yes, yes, maybe, but in the meantime...".

We might also be tempted, a bit like Noah, to build ourselves an ark, a spaceship or a great fortress to save us from this failing world, reserving for us a place on Mars, or else flee to the desert out of rejection and disengagement from our overly complicated and corrupt societies. On the other hand, we may be tempted to project everything onto the hereafter, telling ourselves: "what does this life and its suffering matter, everything will be better when we die!" Of course, this is part of our faith, but only a part of it, because we would be forgetting that this hereafter that awaits us, that is, the kingdom of God, is anchored in the world in which we live, and not in another. This world that God gives us, which is his masterpiece, is the one he chooses to establish the cradle of his Son and manifest Himself to men and women. This world that we abuse is God's world.

It is in this world that his voice resounds and tells us: "Lift up your heads", as if he wanted to tell us: do not hide your face, open your eyes with lucidity and hope, without letting yourselves be blinded by all the other lights, keep your heads raised towards him who is the master of this world.... He wants your salvation. The prophet Jeremiah already announced it: he comes and speaks to us words of joy....

SO GET UP.... RAISE YOUR HEAD...

This is a very old expression in Sacred Scripture, since it is the invitation that God himself makes to Cain when he is about to kill his brother: "Cain, are you disappointed? Do you not understand your father's attitude? Are you angry, irritated, jealous? Do you think that the world is unjust? We agree... But, above all, don't lower your head, if you lower it, you will shut yourself up, you won't be able to live. Lift up your head and welcome what is coming, trust in God! Rise up Cain, don't stay stuck in what destroys you!" **To raise your head as God asks Cain, as Jesus invites us to do today, is to choose life, to resist, to persevere in our choice to do good in a world where so much evil reigns....**

The sun, the moon, the stars, these powers will fall. Did you not know that? Jesus reminds us before his death, and the Church reminds us now before celebrating his birth, that the only solid support that we have had, that we have today and that the world will have forever until the end of time, is called Jesus Christ, the God-child savior of the world.... He who is coming

now... He comes in the intimacy and silence of a simple home. God places his son in us as a divine seed that only asks to grow. May the noise of the world and its storms not prevent us from contemplating the life that God places in us. **He comes Come, Lord Jesus, come to save us....**