

30. September 2019

“Watchful life”

Memory of St. Hieronymus

*Mt 13,47- 52*

*Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet that is cast in the sea and brings in a haul of all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen bring it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in baskets and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the upright, to throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 'Have you understood all these?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old.'*

The end of times will come, even if we think little of it in our daily lives! This mental sleepiness, which accompanies us often enough, is an evil overall, because if we were to think more about our personal end or even the end of times, it would greatly increase our vigilance! It is also Christian wisdom to rethink our actions wisely: the good deeds that spring from a heart turned to God will be rewarded by God's love; but in particular it is necessary to perceive the useless works which disperse us, or even the bad works which bring judgment!

It is not uncommon for our great human weakness that we are not vigilant enough, both in terms of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in dealing with the temptations and distractions that are coming upon us. In fact, Christian life was supposed to be a daily training in the Holy Spirit that would allow us to grow and mature. This may sound challenging given the routine that often determines our rhythm of life.

But this spiritual demand is revealed when we understand that we can serve the Lord in all that we do. We will grow in love when the first thoughts in the morning are already consecrated to the Lord and we take the time to contemplate His Word, to dwell in silent prayer, and to find from this encounter with God the "spiritual line" of the day, namely what the Lord has provided for that day, and when we strive to do everything out of love for God.

Just as human love awakens us for the other person to whom this love is especially important, so spiritual love makes us even more alert to the concerns of God and the concerns of the people entrusted to us. This vigilance will make us more and more attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for it is He who does the work of sanctification in us and calls us to participate in the evangelization of this world. Mindfulness to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will teach us both to follow His suggestions better and not to ignore the admonitions that keep us from doing good and evil!

This inner guidance can become very fine, so that our whole life is directed towards God and we awaken more and more in love. If we go down this path, we can already in this life, with the help of the angels, separate the "bad fish" from the "good fish" (*cf. Mt 13,47f*) in our lives. The good fish may be gathered by the Lord for eternity, the wicked must sink into the sea of forgiveness.

And one more thing: let us think in our prayers of those who have not yet awakened to love for God or who have lost that love again. They need so much repentance so that they can be saved by the judgment of mercy before the last judgment comes!