

23. November 2019

“No one can escape the judgment of God”

*1 Macc 6,1-13*

*King Antiochus, meanwhile, was making his way through the Upper Provinces; he had heard that in Persia there was a city called Elymais, renowned for its riches, its silver and gold, and its very wealthy temple containing golden armour, breastplates and weapons, left there by Alexander son of Philip, the king of Macedon, the first to reign over the Greeks. He therefore went and attempted to take the city and pillage it, but without success, the citizens having been forewarned. They resisted him by force of arms. He was routed, and began retreating, very gloomily, towards Babylon. But, while he was still in Persia, news reached him that the armies which had invaded Judaea had been routed, and that Lysias in particular had advanced in massive strength, only to be forced to turn and flee before the Jews; that the latter were now stronger than ever, thanks to the arms, supplies and abundant spoils acquired from the armies they had cut to pieces, and that they had pulled down the abomination which he had erected on the altar in Jerusalem, had encircled the sanctuary with high walls as in the past, and had fortified Beth-Zur, one of his cities. When the king heard this news he was amazed and profoundly shaken; he threw himself on his bed and fell sick with grief, since things had not turned out for him as he had planned. And there he remained for many days, subject to deep and recurrent fits of melancholy, until he realised that he was dying. Then, summoning all his Friends, he said to them, 'Sleep evades my eyes, and my heart is cowed by anxiety. I have been wondering how I could have come to such a pitch of distress, so great a flood as that which now engulfs me -- I who was so generous and well-loved in my heyday. But now I recall how wrongly I acted in Jerusalem when I seized all the vessels of silver and gold there and ordered the extermination of the inhabitants of Judah for no reason at all. This, I am convinced, is why these misfortunes have overtaken me, and why I am dying of melancholy in a foreign land.'*

We come back to the biblical accounts of the Maccabees. In Yesterday's ongoing reading, which we did not chose in favour of the day of St. Cecilia, the temple in Jerusalem was purified and reconsecrated after victorious battles against the enemies. Eight days were celebrated with jubilation and song, "for the shame which the foreign peoples had inflicted on them was removed." (1Macc 4,58).

God had given victory to the faithful Israelites, and they thanked him with adoration and praise, with sacrifices of salvation and thanksgiving (see daily reading of 22. November 1. Macc 4,36-37.5,59).

It is a great consolation to know that the Lord only allows evil for a while, and it will be overcome. This is the case with history as a whole, even if it looks as if evil triumphs on earth. In the end, the glory of God will appear and the word of the Magnificat will be fulfilled: *"he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate."* (Lk 1,52)

Today we are faced with the tragic end of the Greek King Antiochus. He was responsible for the abomination he had placed on the altar in Jerusalem, for the idolatry. He was also responsible for the deaths of many believing Jews.

No one can escape the judgment of God, who opposes the commandments of God and does evil deeds. He may not be aware for that for a while and, like Antiochus, think that he is affable and popular. He may enjoy this world to the fullest and feel safe in his wealth. But these are all serious deceptions! If there is no repentance, then the burdens of guilt will crush man.

This is what happened with Antiochus. When the fortune he thought he had turned against him, he fell into depressions. The wars were lost, he could not fulfill his wishes and so on!

Even before his death, he recognized the cause of the misfortune, but his despair could not be resolved. It is not clear from the biblical account whether he still found the way to repentance.

The impressive readings from the Book of The Maccabees are a powerful invitation to remain faithful to our faith and not to deny or tolerate foreign elements such as idols contaminating it.

If something like this happens in Rome and the Vatican Gardens, then the temple needs to be cleaned. It is not for nothing that Don Nicolas Bux, a well respected priest, and others call for St. Peter's Basilica to be exorcised because of the presence of the "Pachmama".

The distinguished Don Nicolas says:

*"A sacrilege has been committed, that is, a holy place has been desecrated or treated unworthily. Sacrilege is a grave sin, says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, especially when it is directed against the Eucharist (CCC, 2120), which is present in the churches, is preserved and worshipped. If it is then the clergy themselves who raise an idol to the throne – the caricature of the true God and the work of Satan – then the Lord, as the Scriptures teaches, will surely leave the temple, and a cleansing is necessary to bring Him back. The temple is a symbol of our soul: when we taint her with demonic acts, the Holy Spirit will leave. Let us not forget what the Apostle writes with admirable words:*

*"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (1 Cor 3,17).*

Finally, Don Nicolas suggests: *"Cardinal Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Order of the Sacraments of Worship, could perform an exorcism in St. Peter's Basilica and thus cleanse the basilica."*

This would be an important work for our Holy Church!

I support this proposal!