
"THE LORD WILL COME AGAIN!"



On November 6 I had the pleasure of celebrating Mass at St-Quentin, in Saint-Sacrement Church; the Mass was telecast by Radio-Canada for its "Jour du Seigneur" programme. Since a number of you have requested a copy of the homily I gave then, and since the period of Advent is totally oriented towards the future and full of hope, I offer you large chunks of the homily.

"KEEP YOUR LAMP LIT!"

Last summer, a young person offered me a beautiful lantern, upon returning from a missionary journey to Paraguay. Today, it can serve as a symbol of the attitudes we must have regarding the return of Christ in glory: We must be vigilant, we must keep our lamps trimmed at all time. A number of years ago, Jesuit Father Aimé Duval, one of the pioneer priest-singers, composer and guitarist, wrote the song, "The Lord will come again." It seem to me that through this song it is the God News that we are welcoming in our midst.

The Lord will come again; he has promised it; he will come again the night we don't expect him.

The Lord will come again; he has promised it; do not be asleep, on his return.

Keep your lamp lit, your soul unsullied, that he have to guide his steps.

Keep your lamp lit, your soul unsullied, that he not have trouble finding you.

Await him in your heart; do not dream of seeking your small pleasure away from him.

Await him in your heart; do not dream; let it be bright and airy in your home.

In my affection I call to him: My God, will it be this night?

The Lord will come again: Do not be asleep, on that night.

REAL GOOD NEWS!

The excerpt from the Gospel according to Mark (13:24-32) can raise fear and anxiety: "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on the earth distress among nations..." This particular text has raised fears about the end of the world, regarding the return of Jesus. Certain fundamentalists have taken the text literally and have gathered disciples, and just recently we have witnessed how far such interpretations can lead: to nameless killings and suicides. Prophets of doom have not discovered the Good News that Jesus wanted to unveil for us: all they have seen was the revelation of catastrophe. But simply put, all that Jesus announces - by borrowing images common to his time with those elements usually found in theophanies, that is, in divine manifestations - is the manifestation of God. The entire universe, the whole cosmos is involved in this return of Christ: One must especially not forget the good news of his coming again.

"LOOK AT THE PLANTS, HOW THEY GROW!"

In order to be better understood by his listeners, Jesus employs another comparison: "As soon as [the] branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates" [Mark 13:28-29].

I join you in blessing God for all these tender plants that we see in our midst, I wish to bless God for all those who are preparing the return of the Lord by working at establishing a kingdom of justice and peace, a kingdom of holiness and love, a kingdom of life and forgiveness.

BLESSINGS

I bless God for all the young people who are working at breaking down barriers that have been put up between the generations. I bless God for these young people who have hope in the future and who are preparing for it with courage and persistence. I bless God for these men and women who are working together for better living conditions. I bless God for these families that continue to hope, despite difficult times.

I bless God for the elderly who take the initiative to visit the sick and the handicapped. I bless God for the Christians who get together each week for the Sunday Eucharist: they proclaim to the whole world that Christ will come again. I bless God for the sick who teach us the priceless value of hope, by the acceptance of their trials.

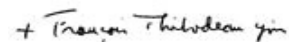
TO PRACTICE RECOGNISING HIM

If we want to recognise Christ at his second coming, we must know how to recognise him today, otherwise we will have difficulty recognising him. Jesus wants to be present among us in his Word, his sacraments, and his Church. He wanted to identify with the poorest and the suffering in our midst; he identified with those who were thirsty and hungry, naked, deprived, and strangers: Can we really recognise him?... I believe that we must train our eyesight if we are to truly recognise him when he comes again in glory. Let us keep watch! Let us keep our lamps trimmed! Let us be ready: he will come again!

A FAMILY PRAYER

Here is a prayer I received on the occasion of the International Year of the Family: "Ever faithful God, You placed us in families so that we may find welcome and love. Give us to love one another and to respect one another. Heal the wounds in our families. Teach us to live together so that the faith may be transmitted to each new generation. Bless and protect our families. We ask this through Jesus, our brother and Lord. Amen."

Have a good week, and a good Holy Year!



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