

New Brighton, Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023

## Last Sunday after Pentecost

“The trumpet shall sound!”

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

“The trumpet shall sound, And the dead shall be raised, And the dead shall be raised incorruptible”<sup>1</sup>

With a solemn tune of trumpet and the Air sung by the bass solo, Georg Friedrich Handel offers us a nice image of today’s Gospel, as Jesus is depicting for us, as a prophecy, what the end of the world will be like.

The end of the liturgical year, which we are celebrating today, invites us to look back to this year, to our entire life and see in our conscience what is it worth. You know it, only two ways are possible after our death: eternal death if we’ve been unfaithful and neglectful, or eternal happiness with the court of the saints, if we remained faithful to any single commandments. This will be decided forever at the instant of our death with the particular judgment. Until this solemn instant, when we will give account of the time we spent on earth, our mission as Christians is to live accordingly, to be a true witness of Christ, following God’s will, and fulfilling the destiny he indicated us.

The trumpet shall sound for the final judgment and the definite reunion of our body and soul, which were separated since the day we passed. The Lord Himself gave us that vision, not to scare us, but to gather us around Him, for us to have a share in the heritage of His saints. All kind of imaginative visions of Hell, eternal damnation and punishment, we could have when we read this excerpt of the Gospel, are a first good move for our conversion, as they are showing us the place where we might go if nothing changes in our life now. But they are not God’s only purpose for today. Jesus is depicting the end of this world to attract us to a better one. “Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.”<sup>2</sup>

We’ve been living this month of November remembering our loved ones, visiting them in our prayer and at the place where they now rest. One more time, we paid them the last homage they deserved, begging the Lord to spare them of the darkness, and to grant them peace forever. We’ve also been reminded that we are mostly to follow them. Let’s not fall into despair because of the vision we might have of our own life and the just punishment it may deserve. Let’s not fall into the opposite excess, being presumptuous and thinking too high about us, telling ourselves that we deserve the reward anyway. We place our life into God’s hands, kindly asking him for the grace of final perseverance, preparing ourselves from today to our last hour, by a good life, hoping that we will not be surprised by an unprovided death, but ever watching.

This vision of the end of the world, which will happen, but we don’t know when, can also be understood as the apocalypse of the sin, which is happening now, and can be a real threat

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Friedrich Handel, Messiah, 3<sup>rd</sup> part. From I Cor., XV, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Mt., XXIV, 35. 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

to our soul and spiritual life. Some evils are not to be fought, because there are too much insidious, too dangerous to risk ourselves in a battle we will certainly lose.

“They are especially the demons of impurity, scandal and apostasy from the faith. Against these temptations, the most effective means of victory is always to flee from occasions. When we see this abomination, we must, according to the advice of the Gospel, flee to the mountains, that is, to the heights of faith and holiness, taking shelter in the open Heart of Jesus.”<sup>3</sup>

The mountains were a place Jesus loved in a particular way, as they offer loneliness from the world and proximity with God. Several times in the Bible, God manifested Himself at the top of a mountain: Moses on Mount Sinai, Elijah on Mount Horeb, and Jesus himself fled the crowds to the mountain to pray, showing us the attitude that we should adopt at the time of temptations.

“O sweet Jesus, detach us, every Year, more and more from this world, whose fashion passeth away, with its vain toils, its false glories, and its lying pleasures. [...]

We lend an ear to the echoes of our home above; and, from the throne of our God, we hear going forth the voice heard by thy beloved Prophet of Patmos: “Give praise unto our Lord all ye his servant, and ye that fear him, little and great! Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned! Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory unto him; for the Marriage of the Lamb is come and his Wife has prepared herself!”<sup>4</sup> Yet a little while till the number of our brethren be made-up and then, with the Spirit and the Bride, we will say to Thee, in all the ardour of our souls that have long thirsted after Thee : Come, Lord Jesus! Come, and perfect us in love, by Union eternal, unto the glory of the Father, and of Thyself the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever!”<sup>5</sup>

The trumpet shall sound, and with God’s grace, will find us watching!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> Blessed Cardinal Schuster, *Liber Sacramentorum*, 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>4</sup> Apoc., XIX, 5-7.

<sup>5</sup> Dom Guéranger, Liturgical Year, 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.