

Birkenhead, Sunday 3rd December 2023

1st Sunday of Advent

“Ad te levavi animam meam: Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam.”¹

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

To You I lift up my soul: in You, O my God, I trust.

“In the liturgical year, Advent represents the time before the coming of the Messiah. It was a period of painful waiting, but also of longing, hope and even joy. We have to relive it. We too have to wait for the Messiah, and wait for him with the same fervour as the prophets, the Jewish people, Our Lady, Elizabeth, Zachary and others.”²

This expectation is marked from the beginning of the Mass by the first words of psalm 24, written by King David, who begged the Father for protection and answer to his prayer. It is the prayer of the penitent king, who is sure that his faith and confidence will never be deceived.

The church chose nothing else than the words of a king to begin our expectation for the coming of the King of kings. This is taken from the dignity of the One to come, and shows us the attention we should pay in our preparation. These words seemed so important to our fathers, than they chose to display it twice during the mass of this first Sunday: for the Introit and for the Offertory antiphon. Definitely, these words should lead our meditation throughout the next three weeks, for the Lord coming to find us ready and expecting when he comes.

In a different way of the Chosen People, we are expecting the Lord to come. They were expecting the Messiah, we are expecting His second coming for the Parousia. Although the feelings are different because the gates of Paradise are now open and Redemption had come, our expectation remains similar to them: we still feel like orphans on this earth, longing for our coming home, in the Glory of the Father.

This Advent season is a perfect moment to remind us about our non-belonging to this world, to this earth, but to Heaven, “for it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we came to believe.”³

“Christ did not come only for the men of his time who saw him in the flesh: he came for all men of all times. So he continues to come. The texts are undeniable: ‘I will not leave you orphans, I will come back to you... if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come into him.’⁴ He comes to each of us who wants to receive him, in a spiritual, mysterious but real way.

He may take many ways. He Himself instituted the main one: the sacraments and Eucharist, the first of all. He inspired another: the liturgy.

¹ Ps. XXIV, 1. 1st Sunday of Advent, Introit & Offertory antiphon.

² Dom Ludovic Baron, L’expression du Chant grégorien. Les temps de l’Avent et de Noël, Introduction. Translated with www.deepl.com.

³ Rm., XIII, 11. 1st Sunday of Advent, Epistle.

⁴ Jn., XIV, 18, 23.

Through the symbolism of the mysteries of his life, which unfolds throughout the year, he lives again, and his words and gestures, through the church, produce in the willing soul the increase in charity that makes him come in a new way and establishes us with him in a more intimate relationship.

At Christmas, then, he comes in all truth to the Church and to souls. Therefore, our expectations, our desires, our appeals can be real and contribute effectively to making him come more fully.”⁵

King David’s words seems to perfectly fit our desire of union with God. The Church enlarged the first meaning of his words to apply them to our time, whenever it is. We are expecting the Lord to come, we’re expecting Him with confidence, because He promised Himself. But the Church and ourselves do not know when it will happen. Therefore,

Let us humbly ask [Our Lady] to make us enter into her dispositions. She will hear our prayer; we shall have the immense joy of seeing Christ born anew within our hearts by the communication of a more abundant grace, and we shall be enabled, like the Virgin, although in a lesser measure, to understand the truth of these words of St. John: “ The Word was God... and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory... full of grace and truth... And of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace?”⁶

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

⁵ Dom Ludovic Baron, L’expression du Chant grégorien. Les temps de l’avent et de Noël, Introduction. Translated with www.deepl.com.

⁶ Dom Marmion, Christ in His Mysteries. VI, Divine preparations, 4.