

THE TIME IS NOW--December 04, 2022

On this second Sunday of the Advent season, the Gospel comes to us from Matthew 3, 1-12. There appears the figure of John the Baptist, the last of the prophets of the Old Alliance, who had the mission of announcing the arrival of the Messiah and who shouted out loud that the way had to be prepared for his arrival through a radical change of life, a conversion. In this sense, John baptized with water, as a visible symbol of this public commitment that those who were waiting for the Son of God accepted, and who were called to prepare by all means for his coming. But Juan, seeing that many approached him without a real intention -some did it out of fear, others out of awareness of their wickedness, others simply out of curiosity-, he immediately warned them: "The ax is already touching the root of trees, and every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Whoever is not sincere in heart will be thrown into the fire, since the Messiah would come to purify the world.

Humanity has not changed that much from the time of Jesus to today. We keep going to the places where we believe God is, most of the time, out of convenience: when we are afraid that something will happen to us, when we are experiencing material needs, when we feel alone and our lives lose meaning, when we are sick, when we need money or even when we need a partner. Many people go to places where they consult the Tarot, the Buzios reading, or consult the horoscope, or visit an Umbandista Terreiro. Others go to churches that promise the solution to their financial problems or their loneliness. But also the "market god" with its financial mechanisms, offers economic solutions to people of all ages through loans, credit cards, investments. Many are those who approach this god of money with the hope of healing all his wounds.

In the Catholic universe we live in a very particular situation, since many children continue to be baptized, many couples continue to get married, many people continue to go to mass, but we continue to see few changes in the way of living faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, of which the political and social implications that follow-up requires are not seen. Many adolescents and young people go to schools of Catholic denomination, many Catholic universities continue to train professionals for society, many politicians were trained in Catholic schools and still claim to be so in their public actions, but their words and decisions that always appear little show under the shadow of the suspicion of subservience to the neoliberal system, to capitalism, and when not, under the halo of corruption. The Catholic Church continues to be concerned about sustaining an outdated system, which only protects the hierarchy, and which continues to let its faithful leave and the few that remain will only be faithful if they obey.

That is why we must take advantage of this Advent season to analyse, to discern, to reflect on how we are living our following of Jesus, how we are understanding the arrival of the Kingdom of God and our collaboration with him. The time is now: let us look at our lives, full of imperfections, but let us be capable of believing that God, who makes all things new, is capable of transforming us, of giving us a new life through the Holy Spirit, in the midst of life what we carry. There, within the vocation we have received, we are capable of opening ourselves to a new call that renews the most important one, which is to be children of God. God loves us and gives us his Son to save us, and he is coming soon at Christmas. Let's not waste any more time, let's get ready, let's prepare our hearts for his coming. Let's not wait to be wrong to seek God. The time is now, and Advent is an auspicious time.