

Examination and Amendment

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Lk 12:32-48
Ave Maria Catholic Church, August 7, 2022 - Fr. David M Vidal

In today's gospel, Jesus speaks to us, the "little flock" and gives us a message from the Father. "The Good Father in heaven is pleased to give us the kingdom" (See Lk 12: 32). The Father sent his Son to us to reveal the kingdom of God. Then, Jesus comes to us and explains the message of the Father.

Jesus tells us that we must not be passive listeners. Jesus's words demand actions. The kingdom of God requires not only good listeners of God's word but also good doers of God's word.

The acceptance of the kingdom of God requires a state of vigilance

Jesus tells us: "*You must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.*" (Lk. 12: 40).

Jesus came for the very first time as our Savior and Redeemer. He came to show us God's love and mercy. And Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. This is what we profess in the Creed.

Being vigilant implies that life on earth is not exactly a walk in paradise, but it is very much spiritual combat. We must fight against the devil who wants to share his eternal misery with us, a fight against a world that has been corrupted and refuses to change, and a fight against the evil inclinations that we inherited from original sin.

This is not a peaceful stroll with the breeze of the early morning. This is more like a tough run under the blistering heat of the noonday sun. It requires effort and perseverance. It requires determination and conviction.

However, sometimes we forget the whole meaning and purpose of our life here on earth. Today's gospel speaks of the consequence that follows that forgetfulness: "*But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish the servant severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful.*" (Lk 12: 45-46).

Now, vigilance implies personal examination

The philosopher Plato attributes this quote to his master and friend Socrates in the *Apology*: "*The unexamined life is not worth living.*" There is so much truth in that message! How can we know that we are in good health if we do not examine ourselves?

Being prepared for a judgment day requires personal examination. This is a most challenging task because we tend to hide ourselves from ourselves. It is easy for us to judge others, but it is difficult for us to judge ourselves.

Saint Augustine describes this difficulty when he presents the story of his conversion. In his *Confessions*, he tells how God moved him to see himself as he was: “*But You, O Lord . . . turned me towards myself, taking me from behind my back, where I had placed myself while unwilling to exercise self-scrutiny; and You set me face to face with myself, that I might behold how foul I was, and how crooked,*” (*Confessions*, book 8, chap. 7)

Sometimes we believe everything is fine with us just because we do not allow God’s light to enter our hearts. Like a dark room that has all the blinds closed. Perhaps, the room is in complete disorder, perhaps there are hazards and filth, but without light, you simply do not know. Open the blinds and allow the light to come in, and you will see. That is what examination does for you.

Vigilance also implies the rejection of sin

That is the second condition of spiritual vigilance. The worst enemy of our spiritual life has a name, and it is sin. It is our enemy because sin is a source of descension. It promises much pleasure, joy, and fulfillment, but in the end, it gives nothing and leaves us completely bankrupt, unpleasant with ourselves and others, spiritually paralyzed, and depressed.

Sin is also a source of deformity. It disfigures and discolors God’s beautiful plan of creation and sells us a caricature of life that, in the end, becomes a nightmare.

Finally, sin is foolishness because it is an act of a person who believes to be the complete master of his life when in truth, we are not masters but servants. Life is a gift given to us by the Good Father in heaven. Life is a gift, and at the same time, it is a responsibility. We must give an account of our actions. To forget that is foolishness.

Finally, vigilance implies willingness to do good and it helps to promote a concrete purpose of amendment

Today’s gospel says: “*Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy,*” (Lk 12: 33-34).

It is not enough to reject evil; we must also do good! We must accept goodness in our lives and share goodness with others. That is our vocation, and unfortunately, we sometimes forget that. All the spiritual and material gifts that we have, all graces and talents that we

enjoy, are just loans that must be invested for our good and the good of others. In this way, God's glory will be revealed in us.

How blessed we will be if we are vigilant in our lives!

We hear those words of blessings in today's gospel: "*Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them,*" (Lk 12: 37).

Let us not be afraid to examine our consciences. It will only help us! We will find many opportunities to bring goodness to our lives and the lives of others. And after we discover those opportunities let us act upon them. Amen