

8. The Lord Will Not Delay

Second Sunday of Advent

By Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.

1. After we have considered the sublime program of sanctification which we should follow, it is very consoling to consider the magnificent texts of today's liturgy. They invite us to have complete trust in God's help. "Thy salvation cometh quickly: why art thou wasted with sorrow?... I will save thee and deliver thee, fear not. ... As a mother comforteth her sons, so will I comfort thee, saith the Lord" (Roman Breviary). God does not want anxiety or discouragement. If He proposes to us an exalted way of sanctity, He does not leave us alone, but comes to help and sustain us.

Today's Mass shows clearly how Jesus comes not only for the people of Israel, for a small number of the elect, but also for the Gentiles, for all men. "Behold the Lord shall come to save the nations" (Introit). Therefore, let us have confidence and rejoice, as St. Paul exhorts us: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope" (Epistle: Rom. 15:4-13). And in order to stimulate our hope in Christ, the Gospel (Matt. 11:2-10) presents His wonderful works: "The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

There is no physical or moral misery which Jesus cannot cure. He asks only that we go to Him with a heart dilated by faith, and with complete trust in His all-powerful, merciful love.

2. In today's Gospel Jesus directs our attention to the strong, austere figure of John the Baptist. "What went you out to see? A reed shaken by the wind?... A man clothed in soft garments?"

If we want to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming, we, like St. John the Baptist, must detach ourselves from all the goods of earth. John had left everything and gone into the desert to lead a life of penance. His example invites us to retire into the interior desert of our heart, far from creatures, to await the coming of Jesus in deep recollection, silence, and solitude, insofar as the duties of our state in life permit. We must persevere in this waiting, in spite of aridity and discouragement. "The Lord shall appear and shall not deceive us: *if He make any delay, wait for Him, for He will come and will not tarry*" (Roman Breviary).

To our interior recollection, let us add a greater spirit of penance and mortification. Let us

examine our generosity in practicing the penances and mortifications prescribed by our Rule [for those in religious life], and those which we have imposed upon ourselves with the approval of our confessor or superior. If we discover that we are lax in this regard, it would be well to resolve to do something more: some mortification at meals, in our rest, or in our clothing, some work that is hard or painful to nature.

If we wish to taste the sweet joys of Christmas, we should know how to prepare ourselves with these dispositions which the Church invites us to pray for today: “We beseech Thee, O Lord, to teach us ... to despise the things of earth and to love those of heaven” (Roman Missal).

Text taken from [Divine Intimacy](#) (Baronius Press, 2015), pp. 24-25.