

(From the Red Book - Pray with Your Heart)

(P. 204 - )

"Prepare yourselves for Christmas with prayer, penance and works of love"

When Mirjana announced the content of the last before one locution, many telephoned to ask, 'Has she already told you when, how... ?' And many were also frightened. I also heard some people saying, 'If something is bound to happen, if we cannot stop it, then why work, why pray, why fast?' All reactions like these are false.

These messages are apocalyptic, and in order to understand them, one needs perhaps to read once again the Apocalypse of St. John or Jesus' address in the Gospel admonishing his listeners.

During these last two Sundays you have been hearing of signs of the stars and many other things - when will this happen? Jesus said, "Soon". But this 'soon' is not to be gauged in our days or months. These apocalyptic messages have a purpose - our faith must be awake and not asleep.

Remember some of Jesus' parables, when He talked about the ten virgins, five of who were wise and five foolish - what did the foolishness of the foolish ones consist of? That thought, 'The bridegroom will not come so early', they were not ready and could not go to dinner with the bridegroom. Our faith must always have this dimension.

Think of the other parables of Jesus, in which is said, '... my soul rejoice now for you have enough to eat and drink', and the Lord said, 'Fool, what will you do if this night your soul is required of you? And to whom will you leave all you have gathered?' One element of faith is the element of waiting, of keeping vigilant.

The apocalyptic messages require us to be awake, not to sleep as regards our faith, our peace with God, with others, and as regards our conversion ..... there is no need to be afraid, there is no need to say, 'This soon? Then there is no need to work or pray anymore...' A reaction of this kind is false.

These messages are to enable us to succeed in getting there. The last stop of our journey is Heaven and, if by hearing and listening to these messages we start praying better, if we start fasting, believing, being reconciled, forgiving, thinking of others, of helping them, we are doing well - this is the reaction of a Christian.

The source of our peace is the Lord and our hearts must become a source of peace; they must open up to the peace Our Lord gives.

In a message of about a month ago, Our Lady once again exhorted us to love our neighbour and said, "*Above all, those who provoke you.*" Here is where Christian love begins, that is to say, from peace.

Jesus said, "What is special in loving those who love you? In your forgiving those who forgive you?" We must do more than that - we must love also the other one who causes us evil. Our Lady wants this - at this point peace starts, that is, when we start forgiving, being reconciled, unconditionally. In another message She said, "*Pray and love. Even those things that seem impossible to you become possible.*"

If any of us says, 'How can I forgive ? How can I be reconciled ? ' , he has perhaps not asked for strength. Where should he look for it ? From Our Lord, in prayer. If we have decided to live peace, reconciled with Our Lord and others, then peace starts, and the whole world is perhaps a millimetre closer to peace. Each of us who decides to live peace radically, by being reconciled, brings a new hope to the world; thus peace will come - if each one of us does not ask for peace from others, for love from others, but gives it readily himself.

What does conversion mean ? It means not to allow oneself to give up trying to change. We all know our weaknesses and the weaknesses of others. Think of Jesus' words when St. Peter asked, 'How many times do we have to forgive ? Seven times ? 'Peter thought seven times, but Jesus said "Seventy times seven. " One must on no account ever get tired of trying, but continue one's path with Our Lady.

In Her last Thursday's message, Our Lady said, "*I appeal to you , prepare yourselves for Christmas*", *but you must prepare yourselves in prayer, penance, in works of love. "Do not look at material things for they will stop you and you will not be able to live the experience of Christmas"*. She repeated, as it were, all the messages - prayer, penance and works of love

We have interpreted the messages in this way and in this way, we try and live them in the community, in the parish - one hour for preparation, one hour for Mass, and after Mass, thanksgiving .

It is most important to pray in families, in the groups, in the parish ; to pray and love as Our Lady said, and then all things, even those which seem impossible will become possible.

And when you get back to your homes, I wish you to try doing this. Everything can be changed for the better if we start praying, loving radically, unconditionally.

In order to love and pray this way, one must also pray for the grace of love. Our Lady has told us many times that Our Lord is happy if He can grant us His mercy, His love.

Also this evening He is at our disposal - and if we open ourselves, if we pray, Our Lord will grant us them.

(Fr. Slavko Barbaric - 7th December 1985)