

2018.12.02 Homily by Fr. Gabor – C6

Today's Gospel story about the end of times, about Jesus' return sounds quite frightening, because it describes an apocalyptic event: 'on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves, men dying of fear ... for the powers of heaven will be shaken'. It sounds that a global or even cosmic event and transformation will happen: the old order will disappear and suddenly a new order will appear: 'they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'

Let me just focus on the expression '...the powers of heaven will be shaken...' This is what Luke's Gospel says, but Mark's Gospel puts it this way: '...the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken...' (Mk 13:25). Stars were reference points for the people in Jesus' times when they travelled in darkness, so the falling of the stars and the shaking of the heavenly bodies, like planets, meant for them that their reference points, their focal points, that helped them navigate during their journey, will disappear or will be shaken up when Jesus will return. So they probably interpreted Luke's Gospel in a way that when Jesus comes back their world will be completely turned around and Jesus will be their new reference and focal point. He will be the new reference point in the skies, because, as Luke says: 'they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'

How are these words of Jesus relevant to us? We also have reference or focal points in our lives; things around which our lives revolve: such as money, family, country, success, etc. These are not bad things by themselves, in fact very important things, when they are put in the right order, but when Jesus comes into our lives, these focal points; these guiding realities become relatively important. This is how we know who or what our actual reference points are. If Jesus is the focal point lives do not revolve anymore around money, family, country, worldly success, etc. but around Him, and all these other things become relatively important. This is what new converts or new-born Christians experience. We can already experience this transformation and shift of focus, if we take to heart and follow what Jesus already tells us

- with regards to money and riches: ‘Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me’ (Lk 18:22)
- with regards to family: unless you prefer me to your family you cannot be my disciples (cf. Lk 14: 26)
- with regards to pride: ‘the one who humbles himself will be exalted’ (Lk 14: 11) or blessed are the meek and humble of heart, they will inherit the earth (cf. Mt 5:5).
- with regards to worldly success: ‘Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you, because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven’ (Mt 5:11-12).

However when you shift your attention from your worldly focal points which give you a sense of security and meaning, and start focusing on Christ, you will feel insecure, perhaps lost and you may even have to face difficulties and attacks from family and friends and colleagues. This is why it is so important to listen to what Jesus says at the end of the Gospel reading: ‘Stay awake and pray at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of God’. Pray at all times; ie. keep your focus on Jesus, seek his will and follow it by the power of the Holy Spirit, because he is the only one who can give you the strength to cope in times of difficulties, and surely He will never let you down!