



1) Opening prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
our source of power and inspiration,
give us strength and joy
in serving you as followers of Christ,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 12,39-48

Jesus said to his disciples. 'You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Peter said, 'Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for everyone?'

The Lord replied, 'Who, then, is the wise and trustworthy steward whom the master will place over his household to give them at the proper time their allowance of food?

Blessed that servant if his master's arrival finds him doing exactly that. I tell you truly, he will put him in charge of everything that he owns. But if the servant says to himself, "My master is taking his time coming," and sets about beating the menservants and the servant-girls, and eating and drinking and getting drunk, his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful.

'The servant who knows what his master wants, but has got nothing ready and done nothing in accord with those wishes, will be given a great many strokes of the lash.

The one who did not know, but has acted in such a way that he deserves a beating, will be given fewer strokes. When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person; when someone is entrusted with a great deal, of that person even more will be expected.

3) Reflection

- Today's Gospel presents again the exhortation to vigilance with two other parables. Yesterday, it was the parable of the Master and of the servant (Lk 12, 36-38). Today, the first parable is the one of the householder and the burglar (Lk 12, 39-40) and the other one speaks of the one of the master and the steward (Lk 12, 41-47).
- Luke 12, 39-40: The parable of the householder and of the burglar. You may be quite

sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the walls of the house. You too must stand ready, because the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. So just as the householder does not know at what hour the burglar will come, in the same way, no one knows the hour when the son of Man will arrive. Jesus says this very clearly: "But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, no one but the Father!" (Mk 13, 32). Today many people live worried about the end of the world. On the streets of the cities, we see written on the walls: Jesus will return! There are even persons who are in anguish because of the proximity of the end of the world, and they commit suicide. But time goes by and the end of the world does not arrive! Many times the affirmation "Jesus will return" is used to frighten people and oblige them to go to a determinate church! After that long wait and speculation around the coming of Jesus, many people no longer perceive the presence in our midst, in the most common things of life, in daily events. What is important is not to know the hour of the end of the world, but rather to have a look capable of perceiving the coming of Jesus who is already present in our midst in the person of the poor (cf Mt 25, 40) and in so many other ways and events of every day life.

- Luke 12, 41: Peter's question. "Then, Peter said, Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for everyone? The reason for this question asked by Peter is not clearly understood. It recalls another episode, in which Jesus responds to a similar question saying: "To you it is granted to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not granted" (Mt 13, 10-11; Lk 8, 9-10).

- Luke 12, 42-48^a: The parable of the householder and the steward. In the response to Peter's question, Jesus formulates another question in the form of a parable: "Who then is the wise and trustworthy steward whom the master will place over his household to give them at the proper time their allowance of food?" Immediately after, Jesus himself gives the response in the parable: the good steward is the one who carries out his mission of servant, he does not use the goods received for his own advantage, and is always vigilant and attentive. Perhaps this is an indirect response to Peter's question, as if he would say: "Peter, the parable is really for you! It is up to you to know how to administer well the mission which God has given you: to coordinate the communities. In this sense, the response is also valid for each one of us. And here the final warning acquire much sense: "When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person; when someone is entrusted with a great deal, of that person even more will be expected".

- The coming of the Son of Man and the end of this world. The same problems existed in the Christian communities of the first centuries. Many people of the communities said that the end of this world was close at hand and that Jesus would return afterwards. Some from the community of Thessalonica in Greece, basing themselves in Paul's preaching said: "Jesus will return!" (1 Th 4, 13-18; 2 Th 2, 2). And because of this, there were even persons who no longer worked, because they thought that the coming would be within a few days or few weeks. Why work if Jesus would return? (cf 2 Th 3, 11). Paul responds that it was not so simple as it seemed, and to those who did not work he would

warn: "He who does not work has no right to eat!" Others remained looking up to Heaven, waiting for the return of Jesus on the clouds (cf. Ac 1,11). And others did not like to wait (2 P 3, 4-9). In general the Christians lived expecting the imminent coming of Jesus. Jesus would come for the Final Judgment to end with the unjust history of this world here below and to inaugurate a new phase of history, the definitive phase of the New Heavens and the New Earth. They thought that it would take place after one or two generations. Many people would still be alive when Jesus would appear glorious in Heaven (1Th 4, 16-17; Mk 9, 1). Others, tired of waiting would say: "He will never come back!" (2 P 3, 4). Even up until today the final return of Jesus has not yet taken place! How can this delay be understood? We are not aware that Jesus has already returned, and that he is in our midst: "Look, I am with you always, yes, till the end of time". (Mt 28, 20). He is already at our side in the struggle for justice, for peace and for life. The plenitude, the fullness has not been attained, but an example or guarantee of the Kingdom is already in our midst. This is why, we wait with firm hope the total liberation of humanity and of nature (Rm 8, 22-25). And when we wait and we struggle, we say rightly: "He is already in our midst!" (Mt 25, 40).

4) Personal questions

- The response of Jesus to Peter serves also for us, for me. Am I a good administrator of the mission which I have received?
- What do I do in order to be always vigilant?

5) Concluding prayer

From the rising of the sun to its setting,
praised be the name of Yahweh!
Supreme over all nations is Yahweh,
supreme over the heavens his glory. (Ps 113,3-4)