



Allocutio



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Allocutio: The Coming of Christ

We prepare for the coming of the Lord. But which coming? Christ came the first Christmas although he had been coming in the prophecies. There is the coming of Christ that he speaks of today: it will come upon you suddenly as happened to some in Glasgow the other night. There is that final coming at the end of the world. Just a few thoughts about his coming.

The need of his coming: If we go back we see that the need for someone to come and save us is well-grounded. There is something twisted and perverse in us as a human race and indeed it is in us all. Look at yourself. Like St. Paul we can all say, "The good I would like to do I am unable, the evil habit I want to say no to seems beyond me". Thought we had got rid of slavery? Until the events of last week were disclosed! And you thought Criminal Minds was exaggeration until you see almost live the effort to catch the guys who caused mayhem at the Boston Marathon or the three girls released there some time ago in Ohio after years of captivity. Or what about the madness of World War I. There is a sickness in the human race that needs the coming to a doctor to heal it.

His coming through a woman: That coming was leaked from the start. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3: 15). What is promised is that through the ministry of a woman evil would be confronted and overcome. And we know who that woman was. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son whose name will mean God is with us."

His coming involves a battle: The original prophecy speaks of an enmity "between her seed and your seed". This battle will leave a conflict in the human family between all those who are the seed of the woman and those who are the seed of the evil spirit. We are physically the seed of Eve but spiritually the seed of Mary. But even the seed of Eve would be in battle with the seed of Satan. Abraham was tested to do evil but clung with great faith to God's way and trusted even though he had no seed that someone would be born of him. And when he was asked to sacrifice the son given him he trusted in faith and had his son rescued who in turn had two sons who in turn had numerous children. Jacob despite all his trials never departed from his trust in God and remained heroically loyal in his pains.

In human history the events of the Incarnation and the birth of Jesus constitute the first coming of salvation. When Jesus preached his Gospel he gave us a warning about evil in the parable of the field sown with dandelion. There was the evil's seed sown with the good seed. He was pointing to the battle ahead. Where do we find that good seed? That new good seed is to be seen in those words from the Cross, "Woman, behold your son!" In other words her seed, the seed of the new Eve, from now on was to be found in the many disciples and followers who would stand by the way of the Cross and share in its pains, but who would not partake in evil. That is your task and mine, to be the bearers of Christ although it cost us. The battle is real and if evil is to be crushed then everyone who joins that cause must be prepared to be wounded in some ways. Wounded by selfishness opposed, wounded by the opposition of pride, wounded by the denial of self, wounded by misunderstanding and rejected love. But the love must remain strong so that it does not fall back into some form of sin.



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His coming now: And that is what the coming of Christ is about at this moment. It is about the coming of a new kingdom no longer a slave to sin. It is coming when we allow Christ to become our leader and with him say no to our selfishness and pride, it is coming when we reach out to others, it is coming when we stand by His values in the face of stiff opposition. He wants to come now in so many ways. All that is needed is our saying yes.

His coming in Communion: His coming now amongst us is realised in special way when we receive communion. He wants to come in his special sacrament; all we have to do is to open the door to him. He stands knocking on our door; will we open? When we open our mouth to him we let him in. But then? How often do we leave him standing alone as in the hall or even put him into the cold living room and go off about our other business worrying about the day's troubles? What a miserable welcome does this coming get now?

I urge you to renew the way you receive this special coming of Jesus to you. It is not the coming in the reading of the Gospel, it is not the coming to the crowds. He comes to you personally, for you, a most intimate encounter so that you can sense his love and get the chance to welcome him. "I was a stranger and you made me welcome!" How are we to change from giving him the reserved welcome of a dignitary to an intimate embrace of love? Why do we so often waste this beautiful opportunity to know him as our divine lover? Because I think that in some way the manner in which we receive his coming in this sacrament the better we can help him come to the world.

His final coming: He said to us, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day". He himself so has linked his coming in this second phase to the final coming on the last day. To eat his flesh and drink his blood is certainly a reference to Holy Communion. But it has other layers of meaning. It also means to absorb his Gospel, to take on his values and his way of loving and to be nourished in our thinking and attitudes by him. It is to partake in him who suffered on the Cross for our sins and to partake in his sacrifice. And if we do we will contribute to the growth of God's Kingdom and ensure our being raised on the last day.

Summary: At Christmas we celebrate his first coming and its welcome, welcomed by Mary and Joseph, by the shepherds, by the Magi. Today we welcome him in other ways, by listening to his words and receiving him in the Sacraments and letting ourselves be changed. But in the final coming it is he who will welcome us into the eternal dwellings, "Come you who are blessed by my Father. Receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world".

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill