

Transcription

(For simultaneous translation)

Rocca di Papa, 11 novembre 1978

WORD OF LIFE

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come"** (Mt 24:42).

Have you noticed how often your life just drags on because you are not living it fully but are waiting for "tomorrow," hoping it will bring something "beautiful"?

There is, indeed, a "beautiful tomorrow" in store for you, but it is not the one you expect.

A God-given instinct leads you to look forward to something or someone that will be able to satisfy you. You look forward to a holiday celebration, a vacation, or some special encounter; but then when everything is over you are not satisfied, or not fully satisfied. And you start the routine of your life again without conviction, always looking forward to something else.

The truth is that among the many elements in human life there is one that no one can escape: the face-to-face meeting with the Lord who is coming. This is the "beautiful tomorrow" you are unconsciously looking for, because you are made for happiness, and only He can give you complete happiness.

Jesus knows how you and I search for happiness blindly; in fact, he warns us:

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."**

Be vigilant. Be alert. Stay awake. For although there are many things that you can have doubts about on earth, there is one thing that is certain: one day we will die. For a Christian, this means to meet Christ who is coming.

Perhaps, like many others, you intentionally try to forget about death. You fear that moment and live as if it were never going to come. Rooting yourself more and more in this earthly life, you say, "Death frightens me; therefore it doesn't exist." Yet that moment will come because Christ will certainly come.

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."**

With these words, Jesus is speaking of his coming on the last day. Just as he was lifted up into heaven from among the apostles, so will he return.

But these words also refer to the coming of the Lord at the end of each person's life. After all, when a person dies, for him or her it is the end of the world.

Since you don't know if Christ will come today, tonight, tomorrow, or in a year or more, you have to be vigilant. You have to be like those who keep watch because they know a thief is coming but they don't know the hour.

On the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, Pope John Paul I didn't know that the Lord would have come precisely that night.

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."**

Your life is not merely a peaceful chain of events; it is also a struggle. And a wide variety of temptations, such as those regarding vanity, attachment to money, sexuality, and violence under all forms, are your main enemies. If you are always vigilant you won't be taken by surprise.

Those who love are always vigilant. Vigilance is a characteristic of love.

For instance, a wife whose husband is away thinks of him as she goes about her work or as she prepares something for him. Everything is done with him in mind. Consequently, when he arrives at the end of the day she is overjoyed to see him.

In the same way, a person who loves Jesus does everything with Him in mind.

Consider what happened on November 3, 1974. Near Pelotas in southern Brazil a religious convention for

250 young people had just ended.

The first chartered bus left with forty-five people aboard who were joyfully singing, expressing their love for Jesus. As they were travelling, some of the girls started to pray the rosary, asking Our Lady to help them to be faithful to God to the end of their lives.

A short time later, the brakes failed and the bus went out of control around a curve, turning over three times as it fell a hundred and fifty feet. Six girls died.

One who survived said, "I saw death but I was not afraid because God was there."

The Lord came, the Lord will come!

Another one said, "When I realized I could move, I knelt in the midst of the debris among the bodies of my friends, and I looked at the starry sky and prayed. God was there with us."

The Lord came, the Lord will come!

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."**

The girls from Pelotas were watching because they were loving, and when the Lord came, they went to meet Him with joy.

Chiara Lubich