

**Homily – Saturday of the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time  
Pastoral Council Mass – December 2, 2023**

In the first reading, we are faced with an apocalyptic and symbolic language, loaded with images and figures, orienting everything towards the end of time. With this liturgy, we conclude Ordinary Time, as the Season of Advent begins this evening.

We now live in the age of earthly rulers, represented in Daniel's prophecy by four kingdoms, corresponding to four beasts. Perhaps the number 4 refers to the 4 cardinal points, meaning that the kings of the earth rule with temporary power, but the elect ones will rule for eternity. And how can we reign, now in this world, if not through service? To serve is to reign. Moments of persecution will come. Christians have experienced them for two thousand years. But if we affirm ourselves in Him who reigns from the cross, we will partake in his blessedness.

Today's gospel is brief, but very dense. The Lord invites us to pray. He warns us against vices, and the anxieties of daily life. They hinder us, not only in the body, but also in mind and spirit.

If we only seek greater well-being, comfort, or power, or if we get caught up in hyperactivity, we will easily fall into the trap about which Jesus warns us. That is, a life without meaning, with spiritual depression. We must remain alert, attentive to the signs of the times.

However, there is always a favorable occasion for the Son of Man to manifest himself. Let us wait for Him, with the lamps lit. The Lord is near. He will come to get us out of that situation from which we cannot get out with our own strength. Let us expand our hearts to give Him a special welcome this Advent. Let us prepare ourselves to partake in the reign of the Child born in Bethlehem.

The works that the Lord expects from us are the works of the faith. He wants us to believe, trust, and risk dying to ourselves through service.

Christian vigilance is a confident waiting, a confident hope, not in ourselves, in our merits, or in our works, but in God. Unlike the watch of a security guard, marked by tension so that no one deceives him, we are called to live at peace, knowing that we are in the best hands. God almighty cares for us.

There is nothing we can do to guarantee our salvation. If we seek excessive personal security, deep down we trust ourselves rather than God. And we know how frail we are. We are called to be vigilant, waiting for our Salvation to arrive. However, the Lord has offered himself as a guarantee for our salvation. Our vigilance must be peaceful and cheerful.

Pope Francis reminds us that we must *“give substance to this anticipation: by undertaking a journey of conversion.”* The day and the hour are unknown, which makes it wise to consider every moment as definitive. It is necessary to watch and be vigilant. It is dangerous to fall asleep, believing that we will be awake at the right time. Evangelical vigilance involves living in an attitude of service, always ready for the master who can return at any time. This attitude implies effort, renunciation, character, will, in some cases even a certain “boldness.”

To speak in Daniel’s language, the court is already convened. The kingship and dominion of Christ is ready to be established in your heart. Remain vigilant.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe help us remain always awake and at work, so that, when the Lord returns, he will find us vigilant.