

A walk among the tombstones



Every person knows very well what his end will be: death. The first time that I realized that someday I will die was when I was eleven years old. At that time it was very common to hear of the end of the world. I remember I went to the cinema and saw posters for several movies with an apocalyptic topic, like 2012 or I am Legend. Then it became a topic of conversation with my classmates: When will be the end of the world? How will

we die? Where will we be at that moment? The uncertainty about the future and technological development, the spread of new diseases and the year 2012 became a very common subject. And I was really scared.

One night, before going to bed, I took courage and I told my mom about my fear. She told me that it is normal to feel like that, it is normal to feel worried about the unknown and that it is very true that all of us will die someday. At the end, she added that we are in the hands of God and that if I still struggled with those thoughts, I should pray to Him and He would help me.

The next day I decided to try what my mom told me. My school was a Catholic school, run by nuns, so we had a chapel. I went there in the morning before the bell rang. I felt odd. It was uncommon for an older student like me to go to the chapel. That was for little boys and pious girls. Yet I knew inside of me that to do this would be helpful. I knelt and started to pray to God telling him my fears and asking Him for his help. Help He did. My fears began to fade.

This became a common routine for me. Every morning before the bell rang, I was in the chapel, kneeling next to the little boys and the pious girls, praying to God and asking him to protect me and never to abandon me.

With each passing day, I felt calmer about death. But I was aware that it is normal for human beings to have all those fears because we live in a material world and all the immaterial and abstract things such as death and the afterlife scare us. As men we need to put our securities in something visible, like our money, our family, our work, anything that we can touch; and when we do not have it, or it disappears, we start to feel uncomfortable, insecure and frightened.

As Christians, our thoughts must be different. Our trust must be different. We believe in One God that has died -for us! - but has also risen, and what is more, He has promised that we will do the same. We have Hope, so there must be no place for insecurities, for false expectations or for fear, because we know in Whom we trust.

All of us will die; we are pretty aware of that. Sometimes it is healthy to remember this fact, because in that way we realize that life is short and we should strive to live it in the best way, but always calmly and serenely, because we have our trust for the future in God. Hence, we should focus our mind more in trying to reach Him than worrying when we will die, where we will die or how we will die.

Nine years after my first struggles with the death, I can now walk among the tombstones calmly, sure that one day I will be there too. But I will be truly alive, because I will be with the One who is Life Itself.

“Memento mori”