

A NEW WORLD

Rev. 21:1-5: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of God's city, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Here is God's dwelling place with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away.

4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will there be mourning, nor

crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away.

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new. "

Here is a little glimpse of the world that awaits us, all of us children of God ...

Questions about our future seem to be becoming more and more pressing. It

is becoming increasingly commonplace - and ultimately pointless! - to say that everything is going badly and that everything

is getting worse by the day.

To the point where it seems that the gap between the most optimistic and the most pessimistic is constantly narrowing: both sides are coming together to acknowledge the failure of our societies. And young people in particular, according to some surveys, are increasingly sinking into gloom and anxiety...

Many years ago, I attended a peaceful

and silent demonstration organised by the 'anti-globalisation' movement, simply out of curiosity.

Among the many demonstrators, there was a man who struck me as particularly

likeable and who, single-handedly, summed up the spirit of the crowd by holding up a small placard with the words **'I am looking for another world'** ...

This little 'slogan' made me think about the quest of the men and women around us... and perhaps also our own quest (for some of us this morning?).

1- WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Does the Bible have anything to say to us about this quest? What does it offer us as points of reference that could respond to this expectation?

It must be said right away that the Bible is neither optimistic nor pessimistic: it describes the world

that men have created **as it is**. It describes a world deeply marked by sin. The world, that is, the order established by men and governing their relationships, this order with its rules and laws, its written rules and also its unwritten, unofficial rules, which are sometimes more effective or more strictly applied than the official rules!

The world, that is to say, the state of mind, the atmosphere that reigns in human societies.

And when the Bible speaks of this world, it says things that make us think, that compel us to react, and that may seem rather radical at times!

For example:

- 1 Jn 2: 15-17: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—does not come from the Father but from the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of the world; but he who does the will of God lives forever."

- And then, in Jesus' well-known prayer in John 17, he says about his disciples:

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "

- and there are many other passages that could be quoted, which mark a clearly established **boundary**

between the child of God and the world ...**2**

One thing should be noted: nowhere does the Bible tell us that God will one day **improve** the world and make it more just and peaceful ... on the contrary! Rather, we read that in the last days, before the Lord's return, things will get worse!

But what is interesting is that the Bible seems to support this claim: **aspire to another world!**

We even read this powerful call from the apostle Peter in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, encouraging the crowd to '**save yourselves - get out of this perverse generation**', that is, precisely from this world, from the prevailing mentality, in order to enter into **another way of living!!**

Jesus once said to his disciples that in the world it is the strongest who automatically take the first places and dominate the weakest by 'tyrannising' them, but that among them things should no longer 'work' in this way! Jesus had prepared his disciples to understand that the world he had come to announce and inaugurate for mankind was a radically different world... **truly another world!**

He explained this, among other things, in the long discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount,

using a term that was dear to him to describe this world: '**the kingdom of God**'.

And then, in the letters they wrote, the apostles developed at length the question of what this 'kingdom' should be, this new world that God was placing within the reach of men, and what its laws were.

And so the Bible does not offer us an 'improved' world, it offers us **another world**, a world where the rules are different, where relationships between people are no longer based on the same values: **THIS WORLD IS THE CHURCH**, born on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem!

2- A NEW WORLD... NOW!

First of all, when we think about what the Bible promises about this new world, we immediately think of that future, perfect world in which there will be no more mourning, tears or suffering (as we read at the beginning), that sinless world that will be the world after the resurrection for all believers: **eternity** in the presence of God!

But the radically different world that Jesus and the apostles spoke of after him is not primarily this future world! It is the fulfilment of his plan already visible on earth. It is the reality that he makes possible through his grace and that we can discover **today**, now, from the moment we enter into it by faith, that is, from the moment we trust God to receive the gift of his forgiveness, the gift of his Spirit, and to place our lives in his hands.

Yes, the new world that God offers us is **for us** and it is **now**!

And this other world can first appear **in each of us** personally
!

What the Bible offers us is **another inner world**!

It is in the radical change that God brings about in each individual through a new birth that the old things can pass away and all things can become new!

And it is precisely with these new beings, the believers, that God brings about another world, a truly new world!³

And it is indeed true that this world, which is, in its own way, a community of Christians, a local church, even like ours, is in reality a **different world, a new world**!

Do we show clearly in all our actions, in the way we live our relationships ... that we belong to a **different world**?

3- THE CHURCH, ANOTHER WORLD

Just a few distinctive features ...

The church: a world of FREEDOM.

Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians that Jesus has 'set us free so that we may be truly free'!

And in many other passages, he insists, along with others, that the church has

Jesus Christ himself as its head... that it knows no hierarchy, no notion of power or constraints within itself, at the level of the men and

women who make it up... and

that we are all **freed**!

It is nevertheless interesting and important to remind ourselves, as members of

the church of Jesus Christ, that one of the characteristics of the Church is the freedom that reigns within it!

And this is not only true of the Free Evangelical Churches!

The church: a world of FREEDOM.

If there is one concept that still matters today, it is this one!

Because it is so foreign to the world we live in and, it must be said, to

all our ways of functioning!

It's not that easy to accept something completely free of charge.

Sometimes our customs themselves forbid us to do so: polite and well-mannered people do not respond

to an invitation to a meal by arriving empty-handed!

Jesus once said to his disciples, when sending them out to proclaim the good news of God's love

for mankind: '**You have received freely, give freely**'!

In our relationship with God and with one another, nothing

can be bought! We live in a world of gratuitousness!

Let us never forget that God has nothing to sell!

In the kingdom of God, to which all believers belong, the rule par excellence is that of GIVING, with all that that implies!

Jesus even specified that it is through giving that love is expressed at its highest level:

John 15:13: 'There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

The church: a world of TRUTH.

If there is anything to reproach our world for, it is its lies on so many levels... and its efforts to relativise any notion of truth to the point of denying it... The Bible clearly describes the world of the believer as one where truth reigns!

Truth is much more than a mere 'standard', since Jesus declared: **'I am the Truth'!**

The church is the place where truth, in words and in deeds, is restored to its rightful place!

I'm not telling you anything new: we are now in the age of absolute illusion!

We can be victims of total falsification, we can see and hear a multitude of things that appear to be completely real... but are nothing more than the pure product of i...A!!

The consequence is that some people risk being so on their guard... that they will be on their guard against EVERYTHING, including the truth!!

Our world is preparing the younger generations to doubt EVERYTHING!

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that **'the house of God, which is the Church of the living God**

, is the pillar and foundation of the truth.'⁴

And finally, above all else: the church, a world of LOVE

This is what must characterise the 'world' of Christians above all else! This is how

Jesus summed it up: **'Love one another as I have loved you.'**

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love

for one another.'

The subject is endless! Progress in this area is still incomplete! But we can already see so many signs of God's love in the Church!

Conclusion:

Far above all human resolutions and revolutions... God's response to the longing for another world is a **NEW ME** for each of us in this world as it is!

And if anyone among us this morning has not yet made this decisive choice, it remains within everyone's reach to say:

"I accept to enter this other world... the one God offers me... the world of faith, the world of God's reign... where His laws replace those of men: the law of freedom, of gratitude, of truth and of LOVE!

There is no need to wait for a national or global revolution for this!

What if we all took up this challenge... to participate together, with the grace of the Lord, in making our Church even more than 'the world of our dreams'?