

Thursday of the Thirty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 19:41-44): As Jesus drew near Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace— but now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days are coming upon you when your enemies will raise a palisade against you; they will encircle you and hem you in on all sides. They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

“If this day you only knew what makes for peace”

Fr. Blas RUIZ i López
(Ascó, Tarragona, Spain)

Today, the image presented by the Gospel is that of Jesus who “wept over” (Lk 19:41) for the fate of the chosen city that did not recognize the time and visitation of its Savior. Knowing, as we do, the latest news about this city, it would be easy to apply this lamentation to the city which —is both— holy and a source of separation.

But looking beyond, we can identify this Jerusalem with the chosen people, which is the Church, and —by extension— with the world in which it has to carry out its mission. If we proceed like that, we shall find a community that, having achieved the highest summits in the field of technology and science, groans and weeps over the fact it lives surrounded by the selfishness of its members, because it has erected around it a wall of violence and moral disorder, and because it throws its children to the ground, dragging them with the chains of a dehumanizing individualism. In short, what we shall find is people that did not know how to recognize the God visiting them (cf. Lk 19:44).

However, we Christians cannot just be stuck with our mourning, nor can we be misfortune foretellers, but rather, men of hope. We know the end of the story, we know Christ has tumbled down the walls and broken the chains: the tears He is shedding in this Gospel anticipate His blood, which He has saved us with.

In fact, Jesus is present in His Church, especially through those who are more needy. We must assume His presence to understand Christ's tenderness towards us. St. Ambrose tells us that His love is so transcendental, that He has made Himself small and humble so that we can be great; He has accepted to be diapered like a newborn baby, so that we can be liberated from the chains of sin; He has accepted to be nailed to the Cross so that we can appear amongst the stars of Heaven... This is why, we must thank God and discover amid us He who visits and redeems us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“To confess my personal feelings, when I reflect on all these blessings I am overcome by a kind of dread and numbness at the very possibility of ceasing to love God and of bringing shame upon Christ because of my lack of recollection and my preoccupation with trivialities.” (Saint Basil the Great)

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"The true God, who comes to meet us in the disarming docility of love" (Benedict XVI)

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“... When Jerusalem comes into view he weeps over her and expresses once again his heart's desire: "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 558)