Thursday of the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 21:20-28): Jesus said to his disciples: “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know that its desolation is at hand. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains... Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars... for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory..."

Prophecy and apocalyptic in the "Eschatological Discourse"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we analyze this discourse interwoven with words belonging to the Old Testament (in particular from the "Book of Daniel"). Jesus speaks of the future using words from the past, but stressing a new and deeper meaning. What is new is that the figure of the "Son of Man" (of whom Daniel had spoken) is there speaking to us in the present.

The old apocalyptic text is given a "personalist dimension": at its heart we now find the person of Jesus Himself. The real "event" is the Person in whom, despite the passage of time, the present truly remains. Focusing the cosmic images onto a Person, who is now present and known to us, renders the cosmic context a secondary consideration and the question of time loses its importance: the Person "is" ("stays") in the midst of physically measurable things, and His Word is more real and long lasting than the entire material universe.

—This relativization of the cosmic, or rather, its focusing onto the personal, is seen very clearly in the closing words of the apocalyptic section: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away": the cosmic elements pass away, while the word of Jesus is the true "firmament" beneath which man can stay and remain.