

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk 21:5-19*): While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here— the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.

"Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

“See that you not be deceived”

Fr. Joan MARQUÉS i Suriñach
(Vilamarí, Girona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel speaks to us of the last coming of the Son of man. The liturgical year is about to end and the Church presents the “parusia” to us, while at the same time the Church wants us to think of our last days: death, judgment, hell or heaven. A journey destination conditions its planning. If you wish to go to hell, you will be able to behave in a given way according to the end point of your trip. If you opt for heaven, instead, you will have to be coherent with the Glory you are trying to attain. Always, freely. Nobody goes to hell by force; or to heaven, either. God is fair, and gives everyone the deserved prize, nothing more nothing less. He does not punish or bestow honors at random, driven by sympathy or dislike. He respects our freedom. We must bear in mind, though, that when leaving this world, we will not be any more free to choose. The tree will remain fallen by the side it came down.

“To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice” (Catechism of the Church n. 1033).

Can you imagine the greatness of the spectacle? Men and women of all races and all times, with our resurrected body and soul, to appear before Jesus Christ, who is presiding over the ceremony with great power and majesty. He will come to judge us in front of everybody else. If getting in would not be for free, it would still be worthwhile... The truth of all actions, whether innermost or outer, will then be known. We shall then find out whom monies, sons, books, projects and everything else, belong to: "All that you see here— the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." (Lk 21:6). Days of joy and glory for some; days of shame and sadness for others. Whatever you do not want publicly to appear then, you can delete it now through a well-made confession. You cannot improvise such a solemn and compromising act. Jesus already warns us: "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name" (Lk 21:8). Are you ready now?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“But all faithfulness must pass the most exacting test: that of duration. Therefore the fourth dimension of faithfulness is constancy. It is easy to be consistent for a day or two. It is difficult and important to be consistent for one's whole life.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“‘By your endurance you will gain your lives’. There is so much hope in these words! They are a call to hope and patience. The Lord, the Lord of history, leads all to fulfillment. Despite the turmoil and disasters that upset the world, God’s design of goodness and mercy will be fulfilled! (Francis)

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“Human virtues acquired by education, by deliberate acts and by a perseverance ever-renewed in repeated efforts are purified and elevated by divine grace. With God's help, they forge character and give facility in the practice of the good. The virtuous man is happy to practice them.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 1810)