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
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Today, the Gospel presents us with the image of Jesus who “wept” (Lk 19:41) for the fate of the chosen city, which has not recognized the presence of its Savior. Given the recent news, it would be easy to apply this lament to the city that is both holy and a source of division.
But looking beyond this, we can identify this Jerusalem with the chosen people, which is the Church, and—by extension—with the world in which it must carry out its mission. If we do so, we will find a community that, although it has reached great heights in the fields of technology and science, groans and weeps because it lives surrounded by the selfishness of its members, because it has erected walls of violence and moral disorder around itself, because it casts its children to the ground, dragging them down with the chains of a dehumanizing individualism. In short, what we will find is a people who have failed to recognize the God who visited them (cf. Lk 19:44).

However, we Christians cannot remain mired in mere lamentation; we must not be prophets of doom, but rather people of hope. We know the end of the story; we know that Christ has brought down the walls and broken the chains: the tears he sheds in this Gospel prefigure the blood with which he has saved us.

In fact, Jesus is present in his Church, especially through those most in need. We must recognize this presence to understand the tenderness Christ has for us: so sublime is his love, Saint Ambrose tells us, that he made himself small and humble so that we might become great; he allowed himself to be wrapped in swaddling clothes like a child so that we might be freed from the bonds of sin. He allowed himself to be nailed to the cross so that we might be counted among the stars in heaven… Therefore, we must give thanks to God and discover among us the one who visits us and redeems us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “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)

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

- “... 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)