Tuesday of the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 21:5-11): 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.”

“There will not be left a stone upon another stone”

Fr. Antoni ORIOL i Tataret
(Vic, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we listen with astonishment to the Lord’s stern warning: “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). These words of Jesus stand in stark contrast to the so-called “culture of humanity’s boundless progress”—or, if you will, to a handful of techno-scientific and politico-military leaders of the human race, which is constantly evolving.

From where? To where? No one knows this, nor can anyone know it—except, ultimately, a supposed eternal matter that denies God by usurping His attributes. How those who refuse to accept the limits and precariousness inherent to our human condition desperately try to force us to swallow such absurdities!

We, the disciples of the Son of God made man, Jesus, listen to His words, take them to heart, and reflect upon them. He tells us: “See that you not be deceived” (Lk 21:8). These are the words of the One who came to bear witness to the truth, affirming that those who belong to the truth listen to His voice.

He also assures us: “It will not immediately be the end” (Lk 21:9). Which means, on the one hand, that we have a time of salvation and that it is in our interest to take advantage of it and, on the other, that the

end will, in fact, arrive. Yes, Jesus will come “to judge the living and the dead,” just as we profess in the Creed.

Readers of Contemplating Today’s Gospel, dear brothers and friends: a few verses beyond the passage I am currently discussing, Jesus encourages and consoles us with these further words—which, in His name, I repeat to you: "By your perseverance you will secure your lives" (Lk 21:19).

Echoing these words with warmth and the energy of a Christian hymn, we exhort one another: "Let us persevere, for we can already touch the summit!"

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “To prevent his disciples from questioning him about the time of his coming Christ said, 'It is not for you to know the times or moments'. He hid the time from us so that we would be on the watch.” (Saint Ephrem)

- “The end of the sacrifice, the destruction of the Temple, must have come as a tremendous shock. God, who had set down his name in the Temple, and thus in a mysterious way dwelt within it, had now lost his dwelling place on earth. The Old Testament had to be read anew.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Jesus (...) identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God's definitive dwelling-place among men. Therefore his being put to bodily death presaged the destruction of the Temple, which would manifest the dawning of a new age in the history of salvation: ‘The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father’ (Jn 4:21).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 586)