

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
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Today, we listen astounded to the Lord's severe warning: “The days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down.” (Lk 21:6). Jesus' words can be placed in the antipodes of the so called “indefinite human progress culture” or, if preferred, of the unstoppable evolution of some techno/scientific and political/military leaders of the human species.

Where from? Where to? This, nobody knows and nobody can tell, other than, in the last instance, a supposed eternal matter that denies God while, at the same time, usurping His attributes. Amazing, how they try to make us swallow it hook, line and sinker, who, on their side, refuse to accept the temporality and precarious status typical of our human condition!

As disciples of the Son of God-Made-Man, Jesus, we hear His very words and, while making them ours, we ponder over them. He is saying: “See that you not be deceived” (Lk 21:8). This is asserted by He, Who came to bear witness of the truth, while affirming that those belonging to the truth listen to His voice.

And He adds: “It will not immediately be the end” (Lk 21:9). Which means, on the one hand, that we still have time for salvation and we must take advantage of that; and, on the other, that the end will come,

anyway. Yes, Jesus, will come “to judge the living and the dead”, as we profess in the Creed.

Dear readers of Contemplating Today's Gospel, dear brothers and friends: a few verses further down this fragment I'm commenting on now, Jesus encourages us and consoles us with these words that I repeat in His name: “By your perseverance you will secure your lives” (Lk 21:19).

By trying to be a warm and cordial echo of these words, and with the energy of a Christian hymn, we shall exhort one another: “Let us persevere, as we are already attaining the summit with our hands!”

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, № 586)