

# Thursday 34th in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Lk 21,20-28): Jesus said to his disciples, «When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must know that the time has come when it will be reduced to a wasteland. Then, if you are in Judea, flee to the mountains; if you are in the city, leave it; and let those who are in the fields not return to the city. For these will be the days of its punishment and all that was announced in the Scripture will be fulfilled.**

**»How hard will it be for pregnant women and for mothers with babies at the breast! For a great calamity will come upon the land, and divine justice upon this people. They will be put to death by the sword or taken as slaves to other nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the pagans until the time of the pagans is fulfilled. Then there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of perplexed nations when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the forces of the universe will be shaken. And at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. The signs of the times Now, when you see the first events, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near».**

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Today, when reading the saint Gospel, can we afford not to ponder over the present moments, fuller every day with threats and blood shedding? «On the earth anguish

of perplexed nations when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the forces of the universe will be shaken» (Lk 21:25b-26a). The second coming of our Lord has quite often been depicted with the most terrifying images, as in this Gospel, and always under the sign of fear.

But, is it really this one, the message today's Gospel is addressing us today? Let us just look at the last sentence: «Now, when you see the first events, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near» (Lk 21:28). The core of the message of these last days of our liturgical year is not fear but hopefulness of a future deliverance, that is, the Christian complete expectancy of the fulfillment of our full life with the Lord, which our body and the world around us will also share. The events narrated in such a dramatic way just symbolically indicate the participation of the whole creation in the second coming of the Lord, as it already participated on occasion of his first arrival, specially at his Passion, when the sky darkened and the earth shook. The cosmic dimension will not be forsaken at the end of time, because it is the dimension accompanying man since he entered the Paradise.

The Christian prospect is not deceiving, because when all this will happen —the same Lord tells us— «at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory» (Lk 21:,27). Let's not live an anguished life because of the second coming of the Lord, because of his Parusia: let us rather ponder over the profound words of St. Augustine that, already in his day, bearing witness of those Christians fearful of the Lord's coming, was wondering: «How can the Wife be afraid of her Spouse?».