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Tuesday's Gospel: Do not be terrified

Gospel for Tuesday in the 34th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 21:5-11*)

And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, Jesus said, “As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

And they asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign when this is about to take place?”

And he said, “Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified; for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.”

Commentary

We are in the final days of the liturgical year and we listen to Jesus speaking about the end of the world. He is not going to reveal to us what perhaps many people would like to

know: when will it take place?

Rather the Teacher, who always asks us to trust in his word, does not want to leave us in total ignorance about the end.

He is standing before the Temple, and those accompanying him are marveling at its splendor. The Temple, destroyed by the Babylonian army and rebuilt after the exile, has recently been greatly expanded and enriched thanks to the instructions of Herod the Great.

But Jesus warns them that, however impressive it looks, it will be completely destroyed. This in fact took place in the year 70 at the hands of Titus's Roman army. Such an alarming prediction naturally caused concern among his listeners, and they asked what the sign would be of this disaster. But Jesus changes his focus, warning that greater cataclysms were to come. And that

some will try to take advantage of these calamities to proclaim a false messianism, announcing an imminent end of the world.

A look at history confirms Jesus' words. How many wars and calamities, how much suffering down through the centuries! Despite all this, Jesus, with his divine authority, wants to give us security and strength.

These signs are terrifying, but not for a Christian, since "for those who love God all things work together for good" (*Rom 8:28*). Each of us may also confront many difficulties in our own life, but the Word of God, Jesus, is always close by to sustain us.

Saint Josemaría tells us: "It looks as if the whole world is coming down on top of you. Whichever way you turn you find no way out. This time, it is impossible to overcome the difficulties. But have you again

forgotten that God is your Father? – all-powerful, infinitely wise, full of mercy. He would never send you anything that is evil. That thing that is worrying you, it is good for you, even though those earthbound eyes of yours may not be able to see it now. *Omnia in bonum!* Lord, once again and always, may your most wise Will be done!.”^[1]

^[1] Saint Josemaria, *The Way of the Cross*, Ninth station, no. 4.

Josep Boira

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