

Thursday's Gospel: God's Justice and Goodness

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

Gospel (*Lk 21:20-28*)

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and

for those who give suck in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Commentary

Today's Gospel passage leads us to reflect on a truth that faith announces to us and science confirms: this world will come to an end one day. The known universe will end on the day decreed by God's wisdom, and this will be foretold by fearsome events so that people can repent and prepare for the *parousia*, for the glorious coming of the Lord.

But in the meantime, Christians are called to love the world passionately, as Saint Josemaría titled one of his most famous homilies. For this world has come from God's hands and has been purified by the Redeemer's precious Blood. But we also know that we don't have a permanent abode here and that God has foreseen, for those who love Him, a new Heaven and a new Earth.

We need to be able to recognize God's signs. It is not a question of living in

fear, but of asking the Holy Spirit to help us interpret the signs of the times. It would be sad to live so distracted, so absorbed in earthly concerns, that we failed to notice God's providential action and forget about the one thing necessary: to give Him glory in the way He wants us to.

We give Him glory when we seek the good of others, because God is love; and by loving as He wants us to love, we help make his Love visible in the world.

Our Lord speaks here about the wrath of God. The holy justice, the holy wrath of God is compatible with his infinite Goodness and Love. They are not incompatible realities; rather they manifest the purity and perfection of God's love, who desires only our fulfilment and eternal happiness.

Since we are free, God doesn't force his Love on us. But if someone rejects divine mercy, they encounter only heartbreak, desolation, eternal death, hell.

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