

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time



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."

Reading 1 Malachi 3:19-20a

Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire, leaving them neither root nor branch, says the LORD of hosts.

But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays.

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.**R.**

Let the sea and what fills it resound,
the world and those who dwell in it;
let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains shout with them for joy.**R.**

Before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to rule the earth,
he will rule the world with justice
and the peoples with equity.**R.**

Reading 2 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Brothers and sisters: You know how one must imitate us.
For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone.

On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day
we worked, so as not to burden any of you.

Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present
ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us.

In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone
was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.

We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a
disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of
others.

Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work
quietly and to eat their own food.

Gospel Luke 21:5-19

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.

"Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name.

It will lead to your giving testimony.

Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand,

for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking

that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.



IT'S DONE FOR

It's Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem. Some of those who accompany him are amazed when they contemplate «the beauty of the temple». Jesus on the contrary feels something very different. His eyes of a prophet see the temple in a more profound way: in that grandiose place God's reign isn't being welcomed. That's why Jesus takes it for being done for: «what you are contemplating – there is coming the day when a stone won't be left upon a stone: all will be destroyed».

Soon his words have broken the self-deception that is being lived out around the temple. That splendid edifice is feeding a false illusion of eternity. That way of living religion without welcoming God's justice or hearing the clamor of those who suffer is deceitful and is perishing: «it will all be destroyed».

Jesus' words aren't born out of anger. Even less out of scorn or resentment. Luke himself tells us just before that, when he came close to Jerusalem and saw the city, Jesus «began to cry». His mourning is prophetic. The powerful don't cry. The prophet of compassion does.

Jesus cries before Jerusalem because he loves the city more than anyone. He cries for an «old religion» that isn't open to God's reign. His tears express his solidarity with the suffering of the people, and at the same time his radical criticism of the religious system that impedes God's visit: Jerusalem – the city of peace! – «doesn't recognize what leads to peace», because «it's hidden from her eyes».

Jesus actions throw more than a little light on today's situation. Sometimes, in times of crisis as in our times, the only way of opening paths to the creative novelty of God's reign is to give up on whatever is feeding an expired religion, without generating the life that God wants to introduce into the world.

To give up on something lived out in a sacred manner for centuries isn't easy. It won't be done by condemning those who want to conserve it as eternal and absolute. You do it by «crying», since the changes demanded by conversion to God's reign make many suffer. The prophets denounce the sin of the Church by crying.

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