

GOSPEL

Luke 21:5-19

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, 'All these things you are staring at now – the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed.' And they put to him this question: 'Master,' they said, 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?'

'Take care not to be deceived,' he said, 'because many will come using my name and saying, "I am he" and, "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not soon.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

'But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name – and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.'

REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

16 November 2025

As the liturgical year draws to a close, today's Gospel (Lk 21:5-19) invites us to reflect on the travails of history and the end times. Looking at these events and knowing our hearts, Jesus invites us not to be overcome by fear: "When you hear of wars and insurrections," he says, "do not be terrified" (v. 9).

His appeal is very timely because unfortunately we receive daily news about conflicts, disasters and persecutions that torment millions of men and women. However, in the face of these afflictions, and in the face of the indifference that seeks to ignore them, Jesus' words proclaim that the attack of evil cannot destroy the hope of those who trust in him. The darker the hour, the more faith shines like the sun.

Twice, in fact, Christ affirms that "because of my name" many will suffer violence and betrayal (Lk 21:12, 17), but precisely then they will have the opportunity to bear witness (cf. v. 13). We are called to follow the example of the Master, who revealed the immensity of his love on the cross. This encouragement concerns us all. Indeed, the persecution of Christians does not only happen through mistreatment and weapons, but also with words, that is, through lies and ideological manipulation. Especially when we are oppressed by these evils, both physical and moral, we are called to bear witness to the truth that saves the world; to the justice that redeems peoples from oppression; to the hope that shows everyone the way to peace.

Jesus' words, in a prophetic way, attest to the fact that the disasters and sorrows of history will come to an end. At the same time, the joy of those who recognize him as Savior, is destined to last forever. "By your endurance you will gain your souls" (Lk 21:19): this promise of the Lord gives us the strength to resist the threatening events of history and every offense. We do not remain powerless in the face of suffering, because he himself gives us "words and a wisdom" (v. 15) always to do the good with a fervent heart.

Dear friends, throughout the history of the Church, it is above all the martyrs who remind us that God's grace is capable of transforming even violence into a sign of redemption. Therefore, joining with our brothers and sisters who suffer for the name of Jesus, let us confidently seek the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians. In every trial and difficulty, may the Blessed Virgin console and sustain us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: Why do you think Jesus warns his followers not to be afraid, even as he predicts suffering and upheaval? What kind of faith is he calling us to?



Heart: Have you faced fear, loss, or opposition for what you believe? What happened? Did you experience God's presence strengthening you to endure or speak the truth?



Hands: How might you become a witness of steady hope in a fearful world — especially when others feel despair, anger, or confusion about the future?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.