

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, November 14, 2021
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

Towards the end of the liturgical year, we always encounter the “apocalyptic literature” of the Church. These are readings that explain future things in terms of universal upheavals – wars, natural disasters, fearful celestial signs. And many speculators arise interpreting them as fearful omens of biblical prophecies.

As Christians how do we interpret these? In today’s Gospel the Lord Jesus clearly tells us that upon his return in majesty and power nature itself will acknowledge his authority. The whole world will feel his coming. And the heavens will manifest its support by the activities of angels. But notice that Jesus does not speak of punishment, arrests, sentencing to hell. He speaks of “gathering” the elect. He will come to “gather” his people, the people he loves.

We are afraid because we forget that the One who will come is the One who loves us more than any other person has ever done in history. He is not a destroyer, but the Redeemer. He is not a punisher, but the Forgiver of sins. He is not the enemy of our existence. Jesus is the Great Lover. Don’t lovers return again and again to manifest their love? Isn’t that what lovers do? Isn’t that what true friends do? They return to show us that we are not forgotten. They return to build us up and make us strong. How much more with Jesus, burning with love for all.

That is the first thing we must realize when we read the Word of God. It is not a prophecy for doom. It is an encouragement to prepare for the One who loves us most. When we recall Jesus’ return every year, remember that he is inviting each of us to prepare our hearts. For when our lover returns, should we not also be excited to be found the best for him?

As to the exact date or the exact signs, Jesus assures us that neither the angels in heaven know. To speculate is to waste our time and energy. God’s calendar and his timetable are different from ours. Even these operate through love. The best we can do as Christians is to prepare ourselves the best way we can for the Lord. And that is to believe and live in the words and teachings of our Lord every moment of our lives.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

Amen