



Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I turn to you today with faith, knowing that you are the Lord of life and history. Aware of my weaknesses and failures, I set my hopes in you, for you always fulfill your promises. As I contemplate your love that becomes fidelity, I, too, desire to repay you with my fidelity. I am here before you to listen and, in listening, discover your will for me today.

Petition: Lord, may my intelligence be enlightened with the theological virtue of hope.

1. Promise Keeper: Christ promised and delivered. His words brought about a change of spirit: the way we understand the world around us, the way we desire, and the way we choose. All that he did had results, positive results. Many times throughout his preaching he promised us heaven, and through his death he made everlasting life possible for us, even though the price was his own life. When we promise someone something, do we keep that promise, no matter what the personal cost?

2. Solid Ground: Fear stalks us daily. The world in which we live can undermine our trust in God. It is easy to become attached to things of this world, even though they give us only a fleeting pleasure or a temporary security before they pass away, disappear, or vanish. Since our heart is made for God, for the infinite, when we become attached to something not of God, the result is fear. This is a fear of the future and a fear of the unknown. But with God, we know the ending, and we know what awaits us. Listen to those words: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." All that we see and enjoy around us will pass away, but not Christ's promises, namely the promises of eternal life -- of paradise. Be not afraid to hope in God.

3. Learn a Lesson from the Fig Tree: The grace of God ripens us. The moment we are baptized, we are made ready to see God. But there is a lesson, and it might be a bit scary. When Jesus spoke about the fig tree in today's Gospel, he may have thought of another fig tree -- the one that bore no fruit, withered, dried up and died. Christ shocked them that time. We don't know when Christ will pass by the fig tree of our life, looking to pick the fruit of our virtues. However, we can be assured of this: The time will come. Our baptism has made our lifetime a time of harvest. You have all eternity to rest in the house of the Father. The lesson: Bear fruit now; live virtue now. Christ came to give life and give it abundantly (see John 10:10).

Conversation with Christ: Lord, Jesus, may I live a life of virtue knowing that my life moves forward towards eternity. Help me to overcome my fears by placing all of them in your hands, knowing that you hold the solution. Help me to live my baptism faithfully and place all of my hope in your promises.

Resolution: I will live this day with special intensity, offering all for the conversion of souls.