



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint 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."

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.