

33rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR B

(Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mark 13:24-32)
Excerpts from Pope Francis (Angelus 18 November 2018)
by Father Charles Fillion
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Brothers and sisters, in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus seeks to instruct his disciples on future events. Firstly, it is not a discourse on the end of the world, but rather an invitation to live the present well, to be vigilant and ever ready for when we will be called to account for our life. Jesus says: "in those days, after the time of suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven (vv. 24-25). These words make us think about the first page of the Book of Genesis, the narrative of creation: the sun, the moon, the stars — which from the beginning of time shine in their order and bring light, a sign of life — are described here in their decline, as they fall into darkness and chaos, a sign of the end. Instead, the light that shines on that final day will be unique and new: it will be that of the Lord Jesus who will come in glory with all the saints. In that encounter we will at last see his Face in the full light of the Trinity: a Face radiant with love, before which every human being will also appear in absolute truth.

Human history, like the personal history of each of us, cannot be understood as a simple succession of meaningless words and facts. Nor can it be interpreted in the light of a resigned vision, as if all were already doomed according to a fate that removes any space for freedom, preventing us from making choices as the fruit of true decision. However, Jesus says that the history of peoples and that of individuals have a purpose and an aim to fulfil: the definitive encounter with the Lord. We know neither the time nor the way in which it will come about: the Lord emphasized that "no one knows, neither the Angels in heaven, nor the Son" (v. 32); all is safeguarded in the secret of the mystery of the Father.

We know, however, a basic principle with which we must confront ourselves: "Heaven and earth will pass away", Jesus says, "but my words will not pass away" (v. 31). This is the true core. On that day, each of us will have to understand whether the Word of the Son of God has illuminated our personal existence, or whether we turned our back to it, preferring to trust in our own words. More than ever, it will be the moment in which to abandon ourselves definitively to the Father's love and to entrust ourselves to his mercy.

No one can escape this moment, none of us! Shrewdness, which we often instil in our conduct in order to validate the image we wish to offer, will no longer be useful; likewise, the power of money and of economic means with which we pretentiously presume to buy everything and everyone, will no longer be of use. We will have with us nothing more than what we have accomplished in this life by believing in his Word: the all and nothing of what we have lived or neglected to fulfil. We will take with us only what we have given.

Let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary that, with the verification of our non-permanence on earth and of our limitations, she not allow us to collapse into anguish, but call us back to responsibility for ourselves, for our neighbour, for the entire world.