

"By your perseverance you will secure your lives." (Homily)

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"See that you not be deceived. [...] Do not be terrified. [...] By your perseverance you will secure your lives." [Luke 21: 8b,9b,19]

Once again, our nation – our very world – is challenged by discord. Indeed, discord is everywhere: between nations; between political parties; between labor and management; between ethnic groups; between rich and poor; between men and women, husbands and wives. Wars; political deadlock; strikes and lockouts; hateful vandalism; hungry children; spousal abuse; divorce: Whom here has discord not touched in some way? And I have just scratched the surface, have I not? Mass shootings; drug deaths; bullying and suicides: I could go on and on. Is the world ending? Do we live in the end times? Do you ever find yourselves asking these questions? I do.

But fortunately, the Lord Jesus Christ – He, who formed my inmost being, He, who knit me together in my mother's womb – anticipated my question, the untamed travel of my thoughts, my fear, my search for worldly heroes, my desire for quick, worldly solutions.

He anticipated me because he knew me before time, He answered me definitively because he understood my human frailty, He made sure Saint Luke preserved His answer, for me – and for you – and He made sure His Church would persist – through 2000 years of discord (!) – so that his message could be read in Masses throughout the world today for our comfort and instruction.

Thus, "Do not be deceived." The world is not ending. "Do not be terrified." What you see is not God's wrath, but the wages of sin. "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." Persevere in prayer. Gather around Jesus at Holy Mass. Stay with Him. Let Him lead you, and no other. Let Him feed you, and no other. Let the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ comfort you, and no other.

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."