

The Faith of Our Fathers

Our Redeemer desires us to be prepared when He comes. So He warns us of the evils that are to accompany the end of the world so that He may keep us from the love of worldly things. But His warning is also an encouragement. When the evils of this world mount, “lift up your heads,” He says. Because the world (which is not your friend) is drawing to its end; but more so, the redemption you have been seeking is arriving. So we who love God are urged to be glad as the end of the age comes. For soon you will meet Him whom you is your true love and desire. (St. Gregory) ❧❧❧

Our Blessed Lord has kept those things hidden so that we may keep watch, each of us thinking that He will come in our own day. He promised that He would come but did not say when He would come, and so all generations and ages await Him eagerly. Though the Lord has established the signs of this coming, the time of the ir fulfillment has not been plainly revealed. These signs have come and gone with a multiplicity of changes; more than that, they are still present. His final coming is like His first. As holy persons and prophets waited for him, thinking that He would reveal himself in their own day, so today each of the faithful longs to welcome Him in our own day, because Christ has not made plain the day of His coming. (St. Ephem) ❧❧❧

In this Gospel, the Lord is preaching about the coming Final Judgement. He warns and teaches His own how they are to conduct themselves. This teaching is meant not for the ungodly and non-Christians, but solely for His own disciples and Christians. The sermon itself consists of two parts. The first part is a prophecy in which He foretells how things will be when the Last Day is near at hand. The second part is an admonition that men should pray and always be watchful, so that they will be found worthy to escape everything that’s going to happen, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

There is no one so well prepared for the judgment day as he who longs to be without sin. If you have such desire, what do you fear” You are then in perfect accord with the purpose of that day. It comes

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to set free from sin all who desire it, and you belong to that number.

Return thanks to God and abide in that desire. Christ says his coming is for our redemption. But do not deceive yourself and be satisfied, perhaps, with the simple desire to be free from sin and to await the coming of the day without fear. Perhaps your heart is false and you are filled with fear, not because you would be free from sin, but because in the face of that day you cannot sin free and untrammelled. See to it that the light within you be not darkness. For a heart that would be truly free from sin will certainly rejoice in the day that fulfills its desire. If the heart does not so rejoice there is no true desire to be loosed from its sin. Therefore we must above all things lay aside all hatred and abhorrence of this day, and exercise diligence that we may really desire to have our sins taken away. When this is done, we may not only calmly await the day, but with heartfelt desire and joy pray for it and say, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.” In this you must cast aside all feelings and conceit, hold fast to the comforting words of Christ and rest in them alone. (Blessed Martin Luther)

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Lord Jesus, You come in all the terror of the last judgment and when men least expect You. In these days You come to clothe our misery with the garment of Your mercy—a garment of glory and immortality. But You will come again on a future day, and in such dread majesty that men will wither away with fear. O my Savior, condemn me not on that day of the world’s destruction. Visit me now in Your love and mercy. I am resolved to prepare my soul. I desire that You come and be born within me, so that when the convulsions of nature warn me of Your coming to judge me, I may lift up my head and, while the rest of men tremble at the thunder of Your judgment, grant that I may have confidence in You because You are in my heart.

Amen (Gueranger) ❧❧❧

For *Populus Zion*, the *Second Sunday in Advent*. These excerpts are intended as meditative pieces for the Day’s pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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