

## Thursday 26 November

Today is Thursday the 26 November, in the 34 week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing Psalm 146: "It is good to sing in honour of our God - sweet is his praise. The Lord, Restorer of Jerusalem! He brought back Israel's exiles, healing their broken hearts, and binding up their wounds."

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 21: 20-28

'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

Listening to these words, it is hard not to think of the impact of COVID-19 upon our world over the last year. But also of the millions of people who are enslaved by poverty and disease. Jesus does not promise that our lives will be free of pain or struggle. The reading ends with a rousing call to be courageous: stand tall, head up, liberation is nearby. Where might you need to be more courageous? What would that look like?

Today is the feast day of St John Berchmans, a Jesuit from Belgium. St John longed to work on the missions, but he died aged just 22 after working so hard on his studies that he became increasingly weak and succumbed to dysentery. Despite these trials, St John discovered that Jesus does not leave us alone to face them. How does Jesus help you to cope with the trials in your life?



As you listen to the reading again, can you feel Christ strengthening you? If you cannot, where do you need it?

Talk to God now about what is on your mind and ask for the grace to respond with generosity and in love.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.