

Thursday the 25 November 2021

Today is Thursday the 25 November, in the 34th week of Ordinary time.

Greg Thompson, with the Porter's Gate sings, 'O Jerusalem'.

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."

At the time, the First World War was sometimes called "the war to end all wars". Yet, as an anti-war song reminds us, such destruction has since happened "again and again and again and again". What is your first impression of today's reading?

Jesus moves from talking about an historical event, the destruction of Jerusalem, to more general thoughts about the end of the world. It's a frightening time that he describes. What do you make of this part of the passage?

Yet the passage ends with Christ returning as redeemer, a time that the followers of Christ can welcome. Can you picture yourself welcoming Jesus in this way when he appears again?

As you listen to the passage again, notice how it moves from fear to confidence, from desolation to welcome.

As this time of prayer draws to a close, how do you want to respond to the words that Jesus has offered you in this gospel?

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.

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