

Thirty-third Sunday Per Annum (B)
November 15, 2015.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Mk. 13:31).

As we approach the end of the liturgical year the Sacred Liturgy invites us to contemplate the mystery of the end time. It is indeed a mystery, and the day as well as the hour remain the secret of God alone (Mk. 13:32). By this we are not to conclude that Our Lord does not know for He is true God. It simply means that it is not fitting or necessary for us to know. It is therefore futile for us to engage in such speculation. Nevertheless, through the ages, there have been many predictions and movements – some ending in tragedy, which have attempted to usher in this fulfilment of time and of God's kingdom.

What we know with certainty is that Our Lord will come again in glory. We also know that those who prepared to receive Him will live with Him forever. It could be said that the future is decided in the present. The Sacred Liturgy invited us to consider not only this truth of Our Lord's second coming but all things, without exception, in light of eternity. At the heart of Christian faith and hope is the certainty that everything is directed towards an end. This truth is found not only in Revelation but also in the Book of Nature or the natural order. There is nothing purposeless in nature. There is an order that governs creation, and not only creation. Our lives too are ordered and governed by a plan – God's plan which has been revealed to us through Our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:9). While it may appear to us at times that life and human history especially, appear to be an unceasing struggle between good and evil, the certainty that God will reign gives us strength and hope.

It is in light of God's ultimate victory that we understand the writings of the prophets and the Evangelists about the end times. Their aim is to encourage us to remain steadfast in our faith and zealous in the observance of the Law of God in spite of external pressures, persecutions and the bad example of those who have fallen away. Writing to the early Christians in a time great uncertainty and persecution St. John declared: *For whoever is born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:4).* Our faith is our victory. To believe that Jesus is the Son of God; that He was born of the Virgin Mary means that we worship and that we model our life in a God who is humble. This is the message of the whole of Divine Revelation: *The humility of the Creator in becoming incarnate and the humility of the creature in welcoming Him.* This is the scandal of the Incarnation, the scandal of Christianity; that we worship a God who became a baby, a God who got tired and thirsty a, God who died on a cross.

Why is this humility so important? The creature intent on glorifying itself resents the Creator who humbled Himself and will not worship Him. Lucifer himself, the devil's pride are comprehensible in light of the Incarnation. He refused to obey a created will, the human will of Christ. Lucifer's pride is directed against the humility of God in becoming man. The creature –whether an angel or man, who resents the humility of the Creator, will neither worship Him nor serve Him. This is the Antichrist. As St. John wrote to the Christians suffering persecution: *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 2:22).*

History has seen many antichrists both in and outside the Church: men who have attempted either by force or by subtlety of speech to deny the humility of God; men who have attempted to glorify themselves in place of God. Blessed John Henry Newman offers us insight into the activity of the Antichrist in our times: *Satan may adopt the more alarming weapons of deceit – he may hide himself – he may attempt to seduce us in little things and so to move Christians, not all at once, but little by little from their true position. We know he has done much in this way in the course of the last centuries.* What is our *true position*? It can only be one of humility before the God who became man in the immaculate womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our *true position* takes His words of revelation at face value. Our *true position* acknowledges that His words of truth are incontrovertible; not subject to change or interpretation. *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Mk. 13:31).* Our *true position* accepts the invitation that Our Lord makes to everyone who follows Him: *Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart (Mt. 11:29).* Our *true position* is a belief in Christ that does not exclude the humble Virgin Mother. A belief in Christ that neglects His Holy Mother in time devolves into a Christ-less Christianity. Our Lady is the God-given protection of the truth about Jesus.

As we prepare to celebrate next Sunday the glorious Feast of Christ the King, let us ask Our Lady to teach us to approach the Mystery of Christ as she did – with profound humility. Our God does not request the slaughter of innocents. Our God is not an impersonal force, a generic god of sorts but a Personal God whose Sacred Heart expresses all that we His disciples are called to be: men and women of passionate love and devotion, disciples whose own hearts are gentle and humble. St. John cautions us: *Many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist (2 Jn. 1:7).* We acknowledge His coming in the flesh in history; we acknowledge His coming in grace in the Sacrament of the Altar, and this coming is also in the flesh, His Eucharistic Body and Blood. In Him we place our hope and so we rejoice and are glad for in Him is our salvation.