

33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)
November 14, 2010

As we get closer to Advent – 2 weeks away – our readings start taking on a theme called “Parousia,” which means “end of times,” “the second coming of Jesus,” or “the Last Day.”

All three of our readings today are a great example of this.

Take our Second Reading from St. Paul to the Thessalonians for instance.

In his first letter, written in about 50 A.D. – about 20 years after the death and resurrection of Christ – St. Paul rejoices with the people at Thessalonica and gives thanks for them and with them to the Lord.

He urges them to be vigilant, charitable, and hopeful for the resurrection of the dead.

Now, in his second letter to the same people, written a few years after his first letter, Paul has changed his tone and is warning the people at Thessalonica to get their act together and imitate him.

This people had been told about the Parousia – the second coming of Jesus – and thus, started thinking that it was right around the corner.

They truly thought that at any minute, Christ would return and take them to himself so that they could enjoy eternal life with God.

As a result, they stopped working and started living very idly and minding everyone else’s business rather than their own.

It was very frustrating and annoying for those who continued living life and working as Paul had prescribed.

So, Paul gets wind of this and writes to the people, admonishing them to get back to work and start living orderly lives again rather than disorderly.

Looking at our own lives, how have we been like the people at Thessalonica and ignored our own responsibilities and duties and busied ourselves with the business and lives of others rather than ourselves?

For instance, when have we disregarded our responsibility of daily prayer and attending Sunday Mass whether it was for family, friends, or recreation?

When have we discounted our duty towards our family and our role of being a wife, mother, husband, father, son, or daughter?

When have we been lazy at work and wasted time playing on our computer or talking with coworkers?

Life can be very demanding at times and require a lot from us.

It takes a lot of energy, time, and heart to live faithfully our vocations.

And even when we try our best, there always seems to be distractions or obstacles in our way.

For instance, unfortunately, there will always be – as St. Luke says – wars, insurrections, earthquakes, famines, plagues, persecutions, and other awesome sights and mighty signs.

There will always be people who hate us because we profess our faith in Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord and Savior.

There will always be – something more urgent needing our attention, the next task to complete, another decision to be made, etc....

Knowing this, how do we continue on?

St. Josemaria Escriva has this to inspire us: “For the love of God, for the love of souls, and to live up to our Christian vocation, we must give good example. So as not to give scandal, or to provoke even the faintest suspicion that the children of God are soft and useless, we must strive to show an example of balanced justice, to behave properly as responsible people. Therefore, everyone must feel obliged to make his work God’s work.”

In other words, to show our brothers and sisters that we are not soft or useless, we are called, for the love of God and souls, to be good examples of responsible people making all that we do and say not for our gain, but for God.

We are to live for God and give Him our very best effort.

And if this isn’t enough, then what should motivate us above all else, even in the midst of all the challenges we’ll face, is the goal of securing our lives.

St. Luke tells us at the end of his gospel to persevere so that we will secure our lives.

In other words, continue to work through life, especially through the muck and the grime so that we may be raised up at the Parousia when Christ will come again to take us to himself so that we may more completely be one with God in the heavenly kingdom.

This is no easy task; but, may we find comfort knowing that not only will Jesus be with us, but that not a hair on our head will be destroyed – God will protect us as long as we trust in His love and divine plan for us as His beloved sons and daughters.