

July 19, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Most of us Christians have been reflecting on the possibility that we may be in the period of trial for the world called "The Great Tribulation" during these most strange days in which we are living. In Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 24), Jesus goes into great depth about the last days and the Great Tribulation. We have copied a majority of the passage for your convenience below. It would be good for everyone to read this chapter and then ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us regarding the current times. The most important part to remember regarding this passage is to be spiritually alert and prepared for these events whether they be now or in the future. Most of us never thought we could be alive during the days that Jesus describes. But as Jesus said, most people during Noah's time before the flood could not believe it was happening either. So, now is the time to be listening to God in prayer like never before so that the light of the Holy Spirit will guide us to discern what is really taking place in our world today. St. Matthew writes:

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold. "Jesus left the temple area and was going away, when his disciples approached him to point out the temple buildings. He said to them in reply, "You see all these things, do you not? Amen, I say to you, there will not be left here a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

The Beginning of Calamities. "As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately and said, "Tell us, when will this happen, and what sign will there be of your coming, and of the end of the age?" Jesus said to them in reply, "See that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many. You will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for these things must happen, but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. All these are the beginning of the labor pains. Then they will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name. And then many will be led into sin; they will betray and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and deceive many; and because of the increase of evildoing, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come."

The Great Tribulation. "When you see the desolating abomination spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, a person on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house, person in the field must not return to get his cloak. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days. Pray that your flight not be in winter or on the Sabbath, for at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect they will be shortened. If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will arise, and they will perform signs and wonders so great as to deceive, if that were possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand. So if they say to you, 'He is in the desert,' do not go out there; if they say, 'He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For just as lightning comes from the east and is seen as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

The Coming of the Son of Man. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in

heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

The Lesson of the Fig Tree. “Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

The Unknown Day and Hour. “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, * but the Father alone. For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In [those] days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be [also] at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

It is not time to be afraid, but it is time to be prepared and to rejoice that God's promises are coming to fulfillment. It is time to pray, especially the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, time to repent and come to Confession, time to come to Eucharist Adoration and Holy Mass if you are physically able, and time to fast and do penance and acts of charity for the conversion of others.

As we have been encouraging for the last four months, please remember that the grace of Christ that we receive in His Sacraments is our sure refuge during these days. We are all being called to find refuge in Confession and to Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist. Once again, included below, is the liturgical schedule with additional Confession times, Mass times, and Adoration times. Weekday Mass times may be adjusted on special days so please remember to check the parish Mass intention section of the bulletin to confirm weekday Mass times. Please remember the Catholic precept to confess sins in the Sacrament of Penance and to receive Holy Communion at least once during or near the Easter Season. Confessions are done in a socially distanced way in the church or outside on the parish grounds. We have many extra confession times scheduled. If you are unable to come to church or someone is home-bound and in need of any of the Sacraments, please let us know and the priest or deacon will come to you!

Come, Lord Jesus to save us, and do not delay!

In Jesus' Precious and Saving Blood,

Fr. Derda, Fr. Steve, Deacon Russ and Deacon Ed