33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (2013)

Theme: **Preparing for the Lord’s Coming**

Readings: Malachi 4:1-2 / 2 Thess. 3:7-12 / Luke 21:5-19

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As we draw close to the end of the liturgical year, we are reminded of an aspect of our belief (creed): that the Lord Jesus Christ “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead”. Thus whether His second coming meets us alive or dead, there will be a judgment (*cf*. first reading). His judgment could be likened to the examination of students. To pass the examination, students have to prepare for it. More so, whereby a teacher could call for examinations ***without prior notice***, one has to be ever prepared in order to pass. Similarly, we should be always prepared since we do not know the day nor the hour that Christ will come again.

Unfortunately, just as there are fraudsters who try to leak fake exams papers, so there have been false prophets who claimed to know the day of the Lord’s coming. In each case, their predications were false. Just a few years ago someone gave 06/06/06 as the doomsday but he was proved wrong. Similarly a couple of years ago another person predicted that the world would come to an end on 11/11/11. When I heard that I knew he was enlisting himself to the ‘HALL OF FAME OF FALSE PROPHETS’; for ***how could they claim to have known what Jesus says neither the angels nor the Son of Man know*** (Mk. 13:32).

As good students would ignore ‘leakers’ of fake exams papers and rather focus on their studies, so let us ignore the false prophets and focus on our preparations for the Lord’s coming. ***There are both spiritual and social preparations*** to be made. Our spiritual preparation includes regular communication with God (through worship, prayers and reading of His Word), bearing testimony to Christ by word and deed, and coping with challenges or persecutions that arise on account of our faith in Him (*cf*. gospel reading).

The social preparation includes meeting our genuine obligations in family and society at large. In today’s second reading, St. Paul reminds us of one of such obligations: ***we should work to earn our living*** (2 Thess. 3:10). This exhortation was initially addressed to Christians in Thessalonica some of whom felt that if the Lord were coming soon, then there was no point in working. I believe that if St. Paul were to be around today he would have addressed another thing happening in our country today: there are pastors who conduct ‘prosperity/miracle’ services ***during working hours on weekly basis***. Those who patronize such services often lose twice: by the envelopes they give to the pastors (which are certainly not offerings to God) they reduce their business capital, and for the hours they stay away from their office/shop/market they lose some sales.

Beloved, like good students who prepare well for their exams, let us fulfil our spiritual and social obligations in a way that pleases the Lord, so that we pass the exams of His second coming with the ‘flying colours’ of Heaven; amen!