

## **False Predictions about the *Parousia* (31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)**

### **2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2—The *Parousia* of Christ**

<sup>11</sup> *To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power,* <sup>12</sup> *so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren,* <sup>2</sup> *not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.* (2 Thess 1:11-2:2)

1. **Vocation:** “call” of God is the baptismal vocation to holiness (1:11 cf. 1 Cor 7:18-18)
2. **Glory:** not just personal salvation, but the glorification of Jesus Christ (1:12)
3. ***Parousia*:** the Second “coming” (Greek *parousia*) of Christ (2:1)
4. **Crisis:** some are being “shaken” and “excited” (2:2)
  - a. **False Visions:** either by “vision”
  - b. **Forged Letter:** or by “letter purporting to be from us”
5. **Overly-Realized Eschatology:** “the day of the Lord has come” (2:2)

*Then if any one says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.* <sup>24</sup> *For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.* <sup>25</sup> *Lo, I have told you beforehand.* <sup>26</sup> *So, if they say to you, ‘Lo, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; if they say, ‘Lo, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.* <sup>27</sup> *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming [Greek *parousia*] of the Son of man.* (Matt 24:23-27)

### **Living Tradition**

**Augustine:** Those to whom the apostle said, “Be not easily moved from your mind as if the day of the Lord were at hand,” evidently loved the Lord’s coming. The purpose of the doctor of the Gentiles in saying this was not to break them away from the love which burned in them. *Rather, he did not want them to put their faith in those from whom they heard that the day of the Lord was at hand, lest, perhaps, when the time had passed when they thought he would come and they realized that he had not come, they might think that the other promises made to them were also false and might despair of the mercy of the faith itself.* Therefore, it is not the one who asserts that he is near nor the one who asserts that he is not near who lives the coming of the Lord but the one who rightly waits for him, whether he be near or far, with sincere faith, firm hope, and ardent love. (Augustine, *Letters* 199.4.15; trans. Sr. Wilfrid Parsons)

## Questions for Discussion and Reflection (31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. Have you ever heard any predictions about the timing of the Second “Coming” that were later proven false? How did it affect your faith?

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## For Further Reading

1. Nathan Eubank. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2019.
2. Peter Gorday, *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2000.