

# FAITH AND REASON

After the recitation of the Angelus prayer on Sunday, 14 November, Pope Francis called on political and economic leaders “to act now with courage and foresight” and to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth that resonated at the UN Climate Change Summit in Glasgow. Earlier, the Holy Father had reflected on the Sunday Gospel Reading of Mark. The following is a translation of his words which he shared with the faithful gathered in Saint Peter’s Square.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Buongiorno! The Gospel passage of today’s liturgy begins with a phrase from Jesus that leaves us astonished: “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven” (Mk13:24-25). But what now, even the Lord was a doomsdayer? No, this is certainly not his intention. He wants us to understand that, sooner or later, everything in this world passes. Even the sun, the moon and the stars that make up the “firmament” — a word that indicates “firmness”, “stability” — are destined to pass away.

In the end, however, Jesus says what does not fall: “Heaven and earth will pass away”, he says, “but my words will not pass away”. The Lord’s words will not pass away. He makes a distinction between the penultimate things, which pass, and the ultimate things, that remain. It is a message for us, to guide us in our important decisions in life, to guide us on what is worthy of investing our life in. In something transitory, or in the words of the Lord that remain forever? Obviously on these. But it is not easy. Indeed, the things that come before our senses and give us immediate satisfaction attract us, while the Lord’s words, although beautiful, go beyond the immediate and require patience. We are tempted to cling to what we see and touch and what seems safer to us. It is human, that is temptation. But it is a deception, because “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”. Here then, is the invitation: do not build your life on sand. When someone builds a house, they dig deep and lay a solid foundation. Only a fool would say that it is money wasted on something that cannot be seen. According to Jesus, the faithful disciple is the one who founds his life on the rock, which is his Word, which does not pass away, on the firmness of the Word of Jesus: this is the foundation of the life that Jesus wants from us, and which will not pass away.

And now the question — when we read the Word of God, questions always arise — let us ask ourselves: what is the center, what is the beating heart of the Word of God? In short, what is it that gives solidity to life, and will never end? Saint Paul tells us. The very center, the beating heart, what gives solidity, is love: “Love never ends”, says Saint Paul: love. Those who do good, are investing in eternity. When we see a person who is generous and helpful, meek, patient, who is not envious, does not gossip, who is not boastful, is not puffed-up with pride, who is not rude, this is a person who builds Heaven on earth. They may not be noticed or have a career, they will not make the news in the papers, and yet, what they do will not be lost because good is never lost, good lasts forever.

And we, brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves: on what are we investing our lives? On things that pass, such as money, success, appearance, physical well-being? We will take away none of these things. Are we attached to earthly things, as if we were to live here forever? When we are young and healthy, everything is fine, but when the time comes to depart, we have to leave everything behind. The Word of God warns us today: this world will pass away. And only love will remain. To base one’s life on the Word of God, therefore, is not an escape from history, but an immersion into earthly realities in order to make them solid, to transform them with love, imprinting on them the sign of eternity, the sign of God. Here then is some advice for making important choices. When I do not know what to do, how to make a definitive choice, an important decision, a decision that involves Jesus’ love, what must I do? Before deciding, let us imagine that we are standing in front of Jesus, as at the end of life, before he who is love. And imagining ourselves there, in his presence, at the threshold of eternity, we make the decision for today. We must decide in this way: always looking to eternity, looking at Jesus. It may not be the easiest, it may not be the most immediate, but it will be the right one, that is certain. May Our Lady help us make the important choices in life as she did: according to love, according to God.

**Advent:** Waiting to Encounter Mercy Incarnate: In the life of every Christian there is an experience of a personal encounter with Jesus, who called us to follow him and share in his mission. We must learn to treasure in our hearts the living memory of that call, when Jesus passed my way, gazed at me with mercy and asked me to follow him. Try to revive the memory of that moment when his eyes met yours, that moment when he made you realize that he loved you. But do I remember it?

Have I forgotten it? Have I gone off on paths that made me forget it? Lord help me, for you know that I want to encounter you and let me be embraced by your mercy. Mary sustains our journey toward Christmas, for she teaches us how to live this Advent in expectation of the Lord. Advent is a time of waiting for the Lord, who will visit us all on the feast of Christmas, but also, each one, in our own hearts. The merciful Lord is coming. Let us wait for him ...**Pope Francis.**

**Act of Hope:** O my God, relying on your infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. **Amen.**

**On this first Sunday of Advent**, when we begin to count the days separating us from the birth of the Savior ... we have considered the reality of our Christian vocation: how our Lord has entrusted us with the mission of attracting other souls to sanctity, encouraging them to get close to him, to feel united to the Church, to extend the kingdom of God to all hearts. Jesus wants to see us dedicated, faithful, responsive. He wants us to love him. It is his desire that we be holy, very much his own... **St. Josemaría Escrivá**

**To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us** - and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference... **Thomas Merton**

#### **Advent Bible Verse For the Day**

**Sunday** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.  
**Monday** You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.  
**Tuesday** But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation.  
**Wednesday** Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.  
**Thursday** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,  
**Friday** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.  
**Saturday** For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future.

**How to have hope: Pope Francis gives point-by-point guide:** Young people should love, believe and follow their dreams, never despairing because Jesus is always with them, Pope Francis said. When life hits hard, they should try to get up again, letting others help them, and if they are bored, they should concentrate on doing good things for others, the pope said Sept. 20 during his weekly general audience. Continuing his series of audience talks on Christian hope, the pope gave extensive advice on how to teach people, especially young people, to remain full of hope. No matter "where God has planted you, hope. Always hope," he said, explaining: -- Enemy No. 1 is not out there somewhere, but inside oneself. "Don't make room for bitter or dark thoughts." — "Believe in the existence of the most noble and beautiful truths" and trust that God, through the Holy Spirit, is ushering everything toward the good, toward "Christ's embrace." — Believers are not alone in their faith. There are others who hope, too. "The world goes on thanks to the vision of many people who created an opening, who built bridges, who dreamed and believed, even when they heard words of derision around them." — Never believe the struggles here on earth are "useless." God never disappoints and he wants that seed he planted in everyone to bloom. "God made us to flower, too." — "Wherever you are, build!" — When life gets hard, and "you have fallen, get up. Never stay down. Get up and let people help you to your feet." — "If you're sitting, start walking!" Start the journey. — "If you're bored stiff, crush (boredom) with good works." — "If you feel empty and demoralized, ask if the Holy Spirit may newly replenish" that void. — Work for peace among people. — Don't listen to those "who spread hatred and division."

**Faith Shines God's Light in the Soul:** St Paul declares that if you would go to God and have access to his Divine Majesty, the first step you must take is to believe; "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11: 6). Faith is the substance and foundation of his image hoped for (Heb 11). It is the cornerstone of the Kingdom of Christ. It is a divine and heavenly light, a participation in the eternal, inaccessible light, a beam radiating from the face of God. To speak in accordance with Scripture, faith is, we might say, a divine character by which the light of the countenance of God is imprinted on the soul (Psalm 4:6). It is a communication and a kind of projection of the divine light and knowledge that were infused into the body and soul of Jesus at the moment of his incarnation. Faith is the science of salvation, the science of the Saints, the science of God. Jesus Christ drew it forth from the heart of the Father and brought it down to you on earth to dispel your shadows, to enlighten your heart, to give you the knowledge necessary for the perfect love and service of God, and to subject your mind to his truths which he still teaches you both through himself and through his Church. By faith you can express, continue, and fulfill in yourself the submission, the obedience, the willing subjection, without darkness, and which his human mind regarded the lights imparted and the truths taught to him by his Heavenly Father. So faith being given to you by God, is a continuation and fulfillment of the loving and most perfect submission of the human mind of Christ to the truths revealed to him by his heavenly Father... **St John Eudes**

**In His Will is Our Peace**  
**Fr. William C. Mooney**

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