

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, 14-17

The first reading of our daily Mass lectionary has brought us to St. Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians. This second letter was written shortly after his first letter given that there had not been any relief in the persecution of the Thessalonian Christians.

St. Paul's second letter tackles questions around Christ's second coming. Someone had forged a letter in Paul's name that the last days had already arrived, and Jesus' second coming was imminent. Therefore, some people in the community had stopped working.

St. Paul corrects this error by explaining that certain events must take place before Christ's second coming. Unfortunately, our lectionary cuts out about ten verses that explain these events.

In the verses omitted from our lectionary, Paul explains that there will be a mass apostasy, i.e., massive numbers of people who will leave the faith. Paul says, then "*the lawless one is revealed, the one doomed to perdition.*" For Paul, this figure will exalt himself, seating himself in the temple of God and even claim that he is a god.

Furthermore, this figure will perform many signs and wonders, deceiving those who do not love the truth and believe lies. Eventually, the Lord Jesus will kill this figure with His second coming.

The Catechism, for its part, draws from St. Paul's teaching in 2 Thessalonians with a rough sketch of how the end will unfold. It speaks of a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. It adds that there will be a persecution and some type of "mystery of iniquity" offering people an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth (CCC 675).

It can be distressing to hear about the trials for the Church prior to Christ's second coming. However, St. Paul's exhortation is worth noting. He tells the Thessalonians hold fast to Christ, i.e., to the traditions that they were taught. Today, we hold fast to Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium or teaching office of the Church. Jesus will take care of the rest.

Sometimes, I say, "Get the little things right and let Jesus be Jesus." Do what the Lord has for you each day and remain faithful to our Lord's Church and you will have nothing to fear. While things will get quite bumpy in the end, have complete confidence in Christ's victory, a victory that is not His alone, but yours as well provided that you remain faithful our Lord to the end.

~St. Thérèse, pray for us!