



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 16, 2014

Again we have arrived at this time of year, when the readings begin to call our attention to the end of time and fulfillment of the Kingdom. Sometimes this can be scary. The idea of “the day of the Lord” coming “like a thief in the night” is very intimidating. How will we know that we are ready? How will God deal with us at the end? Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has offered us the Good News in one of his regular audiences. He says, “We tend to regard this final judgment with a certain trepidation, yet the Church invites us to see it as a source of consolation and joyful hope. The early Christians celebrated this hope using the expression Maranatha to invoke Christ’s return and the beginning of the great wedding feast of a humanity reconciled with God” (Dec. 7, 2013).

This is the joyful news, that we are not just sinners before the angry judge, rather, we are a God’s beloved. We are the espoused of God, the bride of Christ. The Church was created to be Christ’s own spouse in this world and in the next, and he will love us even to the end – just like a husband does. Of course we do have some work to do in this world.

What does the Scripture tell us about our work as the bride of Christ? “A worthy wife... brings [her husband] good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and works with loving hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers

ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy” (Prv). This is our work, to bear fruit in this world, and especially to lift up the poor and needy. Our God has given us everything that we are, and he has entrusted it to us so that it may bear fruit in the lives of our brothers and sisters.

Just as in the parable of the talents, our God expects us to make gains on his “investment” in us. Each of us must answer the call to place the gifts that God has given us at the service of the Gospel. Firstly we have a responsibility to prayer. There is no greater responsibility, no greater joy. Our relationship with God in prayer is capable of bearing so much fruit! Never, never doubt the power of prayer and never neglect it. Secondly, God has given us our abilities. What are you good at? Are you a craftsman, a teacher, an artist, a healer, a leader, a listener, a preacher, a helper, a kind-hearted person, a scholar, a great planner, a writer, a smart business person, a person who can inspire others? All of our gifts can be placed at the service of the Gospel and we should never hold any of them back. God is our beloved, and we should share our gifts with the household of God, the Church. Lastly, we must bear fruit in the lives of those who are currently not experiencing blessings. A Church that neglects the poor, the needy, and the marginalized is a Church that cannot bear fruit. How do you and how does this community care for the poor in our midst? This question must be answered well if we are to be a worthy spouse of our great and glorious groom, Jesus Christ.

The day of the Lord is indeed coming, but we should not be afraid of it. It is true that we struggle with holiness and our call to bear great fruit, but the words of St. Paul today should give us great consolation and encouragement: “You, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober” (1 Thes).

May Mary, our perfect example of the fruitful bride, guide us by her example, and support us with her prayers. May we learn from her to shine to the glory of God, with a value “far beyond pearls” (Prv). May we be a Church like a fruitful spouse, and pray with confidence, “Maranatha,” come, Lord Jesus.