

*Homily for July 13, 2018*

There are sayings of Jesus that are enigmatic. One of the most puzzling comes at the end of today's Gospel where he tells his Disciples:

***When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.<sup>1</sup>***

Now some scholars have read this verse to mean Jesus expected his Second Coming to happen within the first generation of the Christian Community. This is suggested by our Lord saying his coming will occur before the disciples have travelled the width and breadth of Israel evangelizing. Because His Second Coming has clearly not happened, these scholars conclude it calls into question the veracity of Jesus and the authenticity of Christianity.

So how do we make sense of this saying? It must refer to something other than the Second Coming. To uncover the answer we need to read this verse in the context of the passage as a whole. Remember, earlier Jesus had said:

***Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death;<sup>22</sup> and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.<sup>2</sup>***

Jesus is here anticipating the suffering his followers will experience because of his name. That is, there will be opposition within Jewish households, where the anger sparked by those opposed to the Christian Profession of family members will result in parents killing their progeny and children their parents. But those who persevere will be given the ability to witness through the Advocate, the Holy Spirit speaking through them.

It is a stark prediction where Jesus is speaking about what his listeners will experience as they witness to Him. Clearly there is an association between the persecutions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Christians and the coming of the Son of Man because of the chronological sequencing.

Catholic Scholars maintain that the most cogent interpretation is that Jesus is referring here, primarily, to the historical event of the first Jewish war against Rome, which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple in the year 70, and which led to the scattering of the Jewish people. There Jesus is speaking about what would happen between 33, His Resurrection, and 70 AD, the destruction of the Temple.

It was subsequent to 70 AD that the Church – who would be the presence of Jesus in the world, would further develop her Eucharistic Theology, whereby the Altar would supersede the Temple to which the Son of Man would come whenever the Sacrifice of the Mass was offered. Therefore

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#). (1993). (Mt 10:23). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#). (1993). (Mt 10:21–22). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

the Coming of the Son of Man has more to do with what would happen subsequent to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple - where there was a judgement that was world shattering for the Jewish Nation – and Jesus who called himself in John Two, the New Temple, would continually come to us in the Eucharistic Species.

We can anticipate in the beautiful poetry from Hosea how Jesus' Coming in the Eucharist blesses us, Listen again to these words with the Eucharist in mind:

*I will be like the dew to Israel;  
he shall blossom like the lily,  
he shall strike root like the forests of Lebanon.  
6 His shoots shall spread out;  
his beauty shall be like the olive tree,  
and his fragrance like that of Lebanon.  
7 They shall again live beneath my shadow,  
they shall flourish as a garden;  
they shall blossom like the vine,  
their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon.*<sup>3</sup>

Such is the effect in our lives when we welcome the Son of Man and always live hopefully for that Day when he will finally come again to usher in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition\*](#). (1993). (Ho 14:5–7). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.