

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Sep 3rd 2013

A family I know had been faithfully attending to their seriously ill mother; they knew that death was imminent, yet when she finally died it was a surprise to them because, despite her compromised health, she seemed to be doing so well. “I saw her the night she died and she was fine. She was sharp as a tack and I told her I’d see her in the morning. Little did I suspect that I would never see her again.”

I am sure that stories like this abound surrounding the loss of a loved one. They are a constant reminder of the truth that St. Paul expresses to the community of Christians at Thessalonica, “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” We definitely do not know the day or the hour when a person will pass on to the Lord; there’s no predicting that event. We all know with certainty that we will die; that death is the ultimate act of our lives. It is certain, but yet it remains an unsolvable mystery: we do not know the when or the how of our death; we only know that it will occur.

How do we deal with that mystery? One clear way is by living each day fully as a gift of God. St. Paul reminds his community to live their lives alertly and know that “God did not destine us for wrath,” but for living with one another and for the Lord. Paul’s words here remind me of St. Irenaeus that the glory of God is the human person fully alive. The challenge for us is to appreciate that even our ordinary, every-day actions are important in the eyes of God.

Lord, help me to prepare for a happy death by focusing on the moments you give to me. Let me be aware that my actions today are a foretaste of my life fully alive in you. Keep me close to you and attentive to those you have blessed me with in my life. Thank you for your constant invitation to grow as a person of faith, hope and love.

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