

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Oct 25th 2013

Now!

So many of Jesus' teachings are shot through with a sense of urgency. Though Jesus never seems to rush around, what he says challenges hearers to respond now to the proclamation: the kingdom of God is at hand! When Jesus asks in today's gospel, "Why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" (which is to say, "Why do you not sense the urgency?"), he illustrates with an example about someone being hauled before a magistrate. "Settle the matter on the way," is the advice given, as if to say, "Don't wait. Respond now!"

In our daily life, these many centuries after the coming of Jesus, we believers can lose the sense of urgency associated with the preaching of Jesus. Yet, the call to attend to the Lord in the present moment is no less vital. In his work, *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis meditates on the importance of living in the present moment, while revealing the temptation of dwelling on the past, but, above all, the temptation which pulls us to focus on the future. "The Present is the point at which time touches eternity," he says, adding, ". . . the Future is, of all things, the least like eternity."

How well we know the the paralysis of thinking about the future! We can find ourselves absorbed by thoughts, concerns and worries about the future. Such paralysis takes us out of the present which, ironically, is the place where we are most sure of encountering God.

Where is the Lord waiting to encounter us today? He waits in the place and circumstances in which we stand right now. "Why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" Now is the time, this is the place!

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