

ECHOING GOD'S WORD
IN
THE CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY
Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 16, 2025

Lectionary Readings:

Malachi 3:19-20	There will come a day when God will correct evil.
2 Thessalonians 3:7-12	Be faithful and not lazy in Christian living.
Luke 21:5-19	The day of the Lord is surely coming.

Luke:

The Church is always approaching the end of its journey toward the kingdom of God. Jesus is approaching Jerusalem with his disciples. There, they will encounter the mighty events that will usher in the kingdom of God: his dying and his rising again. In the meantime, they and we are coming “to the end.” All things will be transformed by the mighty power of God so that the earthly can give way to the heavenly, so that the powers of darkness can be replaced by the power of light, so that life may triumph over death.

The Synoptic Gospels each feature an “end times” discourse: a speech or sermon by Jesus about the end of the world (Luke 21:5-36; Matthew 24:1-44; Mark 13:1-37). The Gospel selection for this weekend is taken from that discourse in Luke. The whole discourse should be read in order to give context to the passage we have today. By the time Luke wrote his Gospel, the Christian community was starting to see itself as having become the focus of God’s saving work, as the Church. The Temple as sign of God’s presence among people had been destroyed by Roman military forces in the year 70 of the Common Age. God now lived in the midst of an extended people, including both Jews and Gentiles, in Jesus Christ who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, continued to abide in the midst of those who believed in him, that is, the Church community. Although the Temple was no more, God was still present and active on earth. Thus, the relativity of the Temple – it was not absolutely necessary to have the Temple in order to benefit from the presence and the power of God. God is in Christ, and Christ is in the community of those who believe in him.

When the Temple is no more, God will still be there. The disciples of Jesus will always be there. Despite the difficulties already being encountered by the disciples at the time of Luke’s writing, and even until today, the message of Jesus is one of hope and of assurance that all will be safe in the care of God. “Not a hair of your head will perish.” The one requirement is “patient endurance,” that we not give up, that we not falter and fall into apostasy, separating ourselves from the fellowship of the community and of Christ. Other voices and other messages will try to subvert the faithful. False claims will be made, supposedly in the name of Jesus. The “name” is the person. A name has the power of the person who has that name. The name of Jesus can be invoked to heal and to save or to lead astray and to divert from salvation.

Even family and friends may turn against the disciple, but the commitment of Christ will always be there. Christ will never abandon us. The suffering we will undergo truly becomes a sharing in the Passion and death of Christ himself. The “witness” we will give is surely that “martyrdom,” which is the ultimate witness to Christ. No “defense in advance” need be ready. In

the Greek, this means “the practiced gestures of rhetorical experts.” We need not be armed with the sophisticated weapons of the worldly. Those will do us no good. Christ will be our defense.

Malachi:

This prophet most likely lived and worked in Judea after the Exile, after the restoration of the Temple (500-450 B.C.E.). The name is probably not intended as a proper name. It means literally: “My Messenger.” He speaks for the Lord, calling people to a profound respect for the Temple as an image of faithfulness to God. Moral and religious abuses, especially among the priests of the Temple, are his particular target.

Thessalonians:

The issue here seems to be about idleness again. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:14 when that problem was first encountered.) Perhaps, some felt that Christ was coming again really soon; so, why work?! Or, perhaps some believed he had already come, invisibly; so why work?! Paul suggests his own example as one dedicated to earning a living so as not to be a burden to anyone, so as not to burden the preaching of the Gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How are you preparing for the beginning of a new year? Will the upcoming year have much of an impact on your consciousness? Are you afraid? What are you afraid of losing? What sources of security may be shaken or even lost as the year goes on to a new one?

2. If our church buildings and familiar institutions should be lost, taken away, turned to ruin for lack of financial resources to keep them up, what would we do? Would the Church still survive? Would we be seriously handicapped in our mission to proclaim the Good News? What resources do we have to rely upon? Do we truly believe that Jesus Christ is to be found also in the lives of our fellow believers and not just in our buildings and in the priesthood and in the sacraments?

3. What losses have you had to suffer in your lifetime? Could you have imagined ahead of time what life would be like without that person, that property, that money, those collections of personal and family souvenirs? After your loss, were you able to sense the presence of the living Christ in people, in your parish community, in the assembly of faith gathered in prayer?

SUGGESTION FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION

Take an inventory of the things you could do without if you had to. Classify your assets as to those that are essential for your survival, those that are helpful, those that are nice to have but could be done without, those that are more of a hindrance than a help, those that are a real obstacle to further development and growth. Do the same with your spiritual assets: faith, church membership, prayer, etc. What things should you discard? What do you need that you do not now possess? How can you acquire those?

PRAYER
(The Lord) is coming to judge
everyone on earth,
and he will be honest and fair.
(From Psalm 98:9)

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

The traditional doctrine of the Church concerning life after death holds that each one will have to face the judgment of Jesus Christ to determine whether that person will be found worthy of companionship with Christ for all eternity in the kingdom of the Father or whether that person will have to be excluded from the fellowship of the saints for having led a life of alienation from God in this world. The doctrine of the judgment is really a teaching about reward and punishment. Both the good and the bad will rise from their graves at the end of time (John 5:28-29). According to the famous image of Matthew 25:31-46, Christ will separate those who have neglected him by neglecting their less fortunate fellow humans. The matter being judged in that particular scene appears to focus exclusively on how we have treated our fellow human beings, since it was truly the Christ we were dealing with while we seemed to be merely dealing with one another. Those in any need are the Christ. If we took care of people in their needs, we took care of Christ and will be rewarded in heaven for all eternity for having done so. If we did not respond to people in need, we did not respond to Christ and are deserving of pain forever.

The spiritual truth of our having lived in this world will be revealed for all to see. There are consequences to the choices we make while we are alive. We do not live as if it did not have any impact on ourselves or on others. An extreme selfishness and egoism does alienate us from the fellowship of God. That kind of individualism that pretends that what I do matters only to myself is not grounded in spiritual truth. There is perversity and falsehood in living only for one's own greed, for one's own satisfaction. The human person is by nature social. We exist because of the coming together of two human beings. We are meant to be in companionship and harmony with other persons while we live on earth. The earth and its other inhabitants do not exist just for us to use and to abuse. We will be harmony with other persons while we live on earth. The earth and its other inhabitants do not exist just for us to use and to abuse. We will be held responsible for the way we related or failed to relate to those around us in this lifetime.

The Gospel really calls each of us to conversion. The real purpose of the doctrine of judgment consists in giving us an opportunity for repentance and forgiveness.

See **The Catechism: # 1038-1041)**

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