

Homily of Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 2025

Malachi 3:19-20; Psalm 98:5-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Luke 21:5-19

The Church's Liturgical Year ends next Sunday with the celebration of the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. As the Church's year ends and as the calendar year draws to a close, today's readings invite us to reflect on the end of time, judgement, and afterlife.

In the first reading, Prophet Malachi addresses two facts. First, those who lived wicked lives while on earth would not go unpunished. Second, those who lived righteous lives will receive heavenly reward. For them, "there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays."

There are people who do not believe that there is life after death, or there are judgement and reward at the end of earthly life. We know the fundamental truth; our actions have rewards or consequences. Is it not foolishness to exclude this fundamental truth to what happens at the end of our earthly life? Scripture clearly states, "for we shall stand before the judgement seat of God...so then each of us shall give account of himself/herself to God" (Romans 14:12). For us who believe the Scripture, since we look forward to meeting God at the end of life, and seeing him as he truly is, let us make the effort to live life leads us to him.

In the second reading, some Thessalonians misunderstood the meaning of the second coming of Christ. They took the "coming soon of Christ" literally; and for that reason, felt that there was no need to work. Since "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" they were conducting themselves in disorderly manners. It is for that reason that St. Paul warned them, "If anyone was unwilling to work, neither should he eat." It is true that there are people who want to eat but they refuse to work. There are people who reap where they did not sow. There are people who want to get rich quick without hard work. There are people who cheat, steal, rob, and kill to acquire wealth. It is to such people Jesus says that they will perish, unless they repent (Luke 13:3).

In the gospel, Jesus prophesied about the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem; "All that you see here – the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." This prophecy of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by the Romans took place in 70 A.D.

When we hear about the end of the world, it does not necessarily mean the day when the entire universe will come to an end. Our attention needs to be on the end of the individual's life which we know can be at any moment. We all know that every life has an end ("when there will not be left a stone upon another stone"). The important question is, do I prepare myself spiritually and physically?

Unfortunately, some people are afraid or reluctant to reflect about death or make some necessary preparations concerning their death. Reluctance or fear does not remove the reality which faces all of us; everyone will die, sooner or later. Philosopher Martin Heidegger says, "As soon as we are

born, we are old enough to die.” Therefore, getting oneself ready for this reality cannot be over emphasized. Is there a Will to be written? Are there records to be made straight? Are there information to be shared? Are there properties or monies to be allocated? Are there arrangements to be made? Are there issues to be resolved or attended to? And so on. Physical preparation is, equally, very important so that at the end of one’s life, those left behind are not left in the dark.

The Lord says to each one of us, “Behold, I am coming like a thief.’ Blessed is the one who watches and keeps his clothes ready, so that he may not go naked and people see him exposed” (Revelation 16:15).

Jesus warns us in the gospel about the emergence of false prophets and fake pastors who would use the various disasters and afflictions which occur to people and in places as weapons to frighten and deceive people. Jesus says, “See that you are not deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he’ and ‘The time has come.’ Do not follow them....” They prophesy in Jesus’ name, cast out demons in his name, and do mighty works in his name but they are agents of the Evil One (Matthew 7:22-23). Nowadays, false prophets and fake pastors are everywhere deceiving the gullible who do not listen to Jesus’ warning. Jesus encourages us that afflictions, disasters, and persecution should lead to our giving testimony. Jesus says in the gospel, “By your perseverance you will secure your lives.” For those who persevere, trials are channels of blessings. O Lord, grant us the grace of perseverance in times of trials and temptations. Amen.

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