

Homily For the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

St. Peter's Sat 5:00/Sun 8:00 Masses - November 13, 2022

Malachi 4:1-2 "The day is coming when evildoers will be burned up, but not you who revere my name."

Psalms 98:5-9 "The Lord is coming. He will judge the world with righteousness."

2 Thess 3:7-12 "Those unwilling to work, we command in the Lord Jesus to earn their own living."

Luke 21:5-19 "Not one stone will be left on stone. By endurance you will gain your souls."

The Day Is Coming

Introduction

One way to divide different kinds of people has to do with the optimist and the pessimist. The standard descriptions are whether you are a 'glass half empty' kind of person - that's the pessimist - or a 'glass half full' kind of person - that's the optimist. I went looking for jokes about that image. It turns out that there is really one punch line. The glass is not half empty. It's just that the glass is bigger than it needs to be.

But in the Christian life, that image is kind of useless. Over and over again, Jesus describes people who have a full glass and those who have an empty glass. Those with the full glass are desiring to drink up the kind of relationship God has in mind for us. That relationship is based on love. It doesn't mean they are perfect. It just means they are doing their best to follow God, to be disciples. It doesn't even mean that things will go well all the time. In fact, trying to follow God often puts us in conflict with the world around us. Those with the empty glass have shut God out of their hearts. They have said 'no' and so are unable to receive the life giving drink that is for everyone.

The readings for the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C make us think about the end of the world. In the first reading we are told that the day of the Lord is coming. The psalm assures us that "The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice." In the second reading Paul asks that we diligently work for the good of all. In the gospel Jesus speaks about being ready for the end times. The real

division of people will be those who look forward to the time of Christ's return in glory, and those who want to keep admiring what humans have built.

Jesus says you have to be ready for things to come. It will be difficult but don't be anxious or afraid. Now if it is going to be hard, doesn't it make sense to be afraid? Our son was about seven when we decided it would be a good idea to talk about a plan for how we would deal with an emergency in the house, like a fire. That sounded like fun to our son. Yeah, let's do that. But, you know what? At some point when we were talking about things like what happens if there is a fire in the kitchen, or there is smoke everywhere, it suddenly hit him that this would be a really difficult and dangerous thing. He started to cry and we had to stop the safety game. That always stuck in my mind. If we are trying to prepare to keep ourselves safe, we are going to have to think about the things that we need to be safe FROM. And that could be very scary.

But Jesus wants us to think beyond our fear, beyond the things we like to hang on to. Jesus wants us to think of heavenly things and to not be afraid of any danger or persecution in this world. Now it is normal and natural to be afraid. However, what often happens, as it happened in our world recently, we can become so afraid of what might happen that we are paralyzed.

This is the second last week of the Church year. Soon after that, it will be the end of the calendar year. These are two different ways to mark our time. We need to know what month and what year it is. But, even more than that, we need to know that God's plan to save us for eternal life is going on.

Luke

The building of Herod's temple was still under construction during Jesus time. The whole complex was completed in AD 64, on to be totally torn down six years later. It was considered one of the most beautiful building in the whole Roman Empire. The people's awe and wonder at the stones were totally justified. As the house of God, its destruction would seem like the end of the world in the minds of the people.

Nothing in this world lasts. Many things about the world are very good. In fact, everything reflects the glory of God. But nothing in the world IS God. The temple was beautiful indeed. But it was not God. It was the special place that God was worshipped, but it was not to be the object of worship. That would be like worshipping the tabernacle over there, instead of the Real Presence of Jesus which is kept in there every day of the year except the day after Good Friday when Jesus was crucified.

The temple is like everything we want from this life. Those things can be very good. But Jesus says it will ALL be destroyed. That sounds negative, like an empty glass. It sounds like pessimism. But, it is actually the opposite. God wants us to look at all those things, be in awe but then look past them towards the God who made all of them. They are like a little window into the awesomeness of God and his plan of salvation.

In this world, every social media post, every YouTube or Tik Tok video says, 'Look at me. Aren't I pretty? Aren't I beautiful. Aren't I amazing?' When you say in your soul, none of these things last, you can expect a struggle. Those things won't let go of you just like that. When the new life meets the old, there will be earthquakes in our lives.

There will be conflicts between those who accept the new us and those who don't. We Christians, if we take this seriously, we will always be troublemakers. If we find ourselves fitting in nicely with the views of the world, we are off base. We will be standing with everyone, in awe of things that are going to be destroyed. Not just might be destroyed, but will be thrown down.

Everyone in the world is looking for something. Everyone is noticing exciting things or interesting things or inspiring things or beautiful things. Our God has made us to want to be excited and interested and inspired and in awe of beauty. But that's not the end of God's plan. God invites us to look at those things, then look through them to see where those things come from. That's why Jesus came from God to be one with us, to show us where all those things come from. Before he truly met Jesus, St. Augustine describes how he was looking at and enjoying all the wonderful things of the world, the things that God had created. But finally, he

saw where all those things were coming from. And finally, his glass went from half empty to completely full.

It's Jesus. Jesus is not just for a few. He is not just a great teacher of history like others. He is the new world that comes into being when the false worship of the old world is torn down. He is the ultimate sign from God.

Remember when Jesus was popular and he was doing awe inspiring miracles. Then suddenly he was heading towards Jerusalem, to meet his destiny and to make possible our destiny with God.

Jesus addresses the people for the final time before his Passion. Without specifying the time, the days will come. Reminiscent of Malachi's writing of the Day of the Lord. The events that are connected with the end, sometimes dealing with the fate of individuals, but more broadly with God's final, triumphant conquering of evil. Jesus is speaking before the destruction of the temple in the year 70. Heard by the later church, Jesus' words carry the same note of being faithful to the end, enduring the suffering that will surely come to Jesus' followers, and relying on his promise and presence. The message is relevant to the church of any generation.

Our lives are judged on whether we said yes or no to God. His judgment is completely just. He knows our hearts. We get what we have chosen. The final revelation is judgment on our own life. But also how my own life fits into the great story of salvation. Everyone has received pain. The last judgment will reveal the final word on history. Right now we can't see how everything has been moving towards the fulfillment of God's plan. It will reveal that God's justice will triumph over the combined effect of every one of our lack of love. We cannot wait for that day. Do not be afraid of it.

Malachi

Malachi's prophecy opens with a terrifying image. All that will be left will be stubble, with neither root nor branch for future growth. When the people of Israel envisioned this Day of the Lord, they most often looked at other nations as

recipients of God's harsh judgment, while they themselves would be vindicated . However, Malachi's prophecies are a series of sharp indictments against Israel, the people of the covenant who have not kept the faith. The graphic metaphors are to make them aware of their behaviour, and challenge them to turn from their sinful ways. There will be the dawning of a new day for those who have listened to the prophetic word and have turned to the Lord. The psalmist says that the Lord is coming. He will rule the world with righteousness and equity.

Call To Conversion

Jesus says there will be earthquakes and wars and famines. But there has never been a time without earthquakes and wars and famines. Jesus says there will be people who say, 'I'm the one. Follow me.' But there have always been those who make themselves into Messiahs and gods to be worshipped. What are we to do? How are we to tell the difference? We will know we are on the right track because it will upset people and we will be persecuted. Today there are 360 million Christians in the world who are under persecution already.

Before we get to the celebration of Christmas and Christ coming to earth and taking on our nature, the Scriptures and the Church call us to be prepared. This means looking for Christ in every person and every circumstance. That's where the full glass comes from.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. I will lead back you captives from every place.*

Collect: *Grant us, O Lord, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is lasting happiness to serve with the author of all that is good.*

Malachi: *The day is coming when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.*

Psalm: *Sing praises to the Lord. Let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord. For the Lord is coming. He will judge the world with righteousness and equity.*

2 Thessalonians: *Brothers and sisters, you yourselves know we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*

Luke: *Some were speaking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to Go. Jesus said, "The days will come when not one stone will be left upon another. All will be thrown down." They asked him, "Teacher, what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" Jesus said, "Beware that you are not led astray, for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and 'The time is near!' Do not go after them. When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified, for these things must take place first. Nation will rise against nation. There will be great earthquakes, famines and plagues. But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance, for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, by brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. They will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls.*