

NOVEMBER 17, 2019
Sunday of the 33rd Week in OT
Luke 21: 5-19

WE WILL WIN WITH AND THROUGH HIM

Today, the 33rd Sunday is our last Sunday in Ordinary Time before we celebrate next Sunday the Solemnity of Christ the King and after that the new liturgical year, the Season of Advent. This past 2 Sundays, our gospels talk about the end time, death as a reminder for all of us that we are all pilgrims here on earth, and we are just temporary residents here. Death and end are inevitable, inescapable and unavoidable.

In our gospel for today, Jesus Christ shows us some of the end signs in reference to the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem: “the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”¹ This prediction of Jesus happened when the Jews revolted to the Roman authority in 66 A.D. “The military commander Titus (who became Emperor in 79-81) with his Roman legions arrived at the outermost northern Wall of Jerusalem. The Roman army numbered 30,000; while the Jewish army numbered 24,000. After five months in the year 70 AD, the walls were battered down, the great Temple was burned down, and the city was left ruined and desolate, except for Herod's three great towers at the northwest corner of the city.”² The Temple was destroyed because everything here on earth are temporary, only His Words are permanent.

Jesus even said that there will wars, insurrections, earthquakes, famines, plagues, dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. These will take place, but the end will not follow immediately. But before all this occurs, He said to his disciples, they will be seized

¹ Luke 21:10 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

² <https://www.bible-history.com>

and persecuted, imprisoned, and some will be put to death. They will be betrayed by parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends. The persecutions of those who follow Christ happened yesterday, happening today and will happen tomorrow. This enduring faith will define His disciples. Amidst this, His most consoling words for His disciples and for us now is “By your endurance you will gain your souls.”³

In the modern world, Christians are persecuted here and abroad. We are persecuted because we follow the Lord. Let us look on what happened to Fr. Ragheed Aziz Ganni, of the Chaldean Rite of the Catholic Church, who, with his three subdeacons, was gunned down on Sunday June 3rd 2007 outside the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mosul, after celebrating Divine Liturgy (Mass) on the Solemnity of the Blessed Trinity. “He had been ordained just under six years. He had grown up in Mosul and became an engineer before he heard the Lord call him to the priesthood. When he became a seminarian, his bishop sent him to study in Rome. He used to spend his summer vacations while studying in Rome in Ireland where was affectionately called “Paddy the Iraqi.” In October 2001, he was ordained in Rome and was a very good priest in Mosul. Not long before he was murdered, he helped a child with eye problems get surgery in Rome. Unfortunately, he began to experience threats only about a year after returning to Mosul and some family members, friends and parishioners left Mosul for safety in the countryside or outside of Iraq. His decision to remain meant he would give his life for his parishioners just as he prayed during every consecration, “This is my Body which will be given up for you.” Believing the words of Jesus in today’s Gospel, “By your perseverance you will secure your lives”, he secured his life for the eternity. We believe he is vindicated in the next life and although his life was brutally taken from him, he and all the many other Christians martyred in recent decades all around the world are on Christ’s winning side.”⁴

³ Luke 21:19 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

⁴ <https://frtommylane.com>

My brothers and sisters, the Scripture always assures us that in the end of our journey, we will be justified in the next life just have faith to endure all persecutions, hardships, challenges here on earth. Jesus won the battle against the evil one through His Passion, Death and Resurrection, and will always win. He conquered all evil by and through His love, obedience, humility and endurance, we will also win the battle with and through Him. We have every reason to hope and to believe because Jesus with His victory, we are also victors. Don't be afraid of what you are undergoing: problems, difficulties, sickness, suffering, all of this will be nothing compare to what we will be in heaven.

Let us make the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, our prayer: "St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell, Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world, seeking the ruin of souls. Amen."