



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 16, 2025
Fr. John Linden

I'm sure you have taken note of the fact there is no deacon today. And so I must tell you that he is working on minding his own business, quietly collecting his own food in the woods up north. So hopefully he's successful. Hopefully as successful as Father Josh was yesterday on opening day. But I'll let him tell that story.

But it could be easy to miss what the story Jesus is giving us today. What the real issue, the point, he's trying to make is involved in what he's saying to these people today. So easily, just like everybody else, we can get caught up in the signs of the end times. And what are. Are we there? I mean, there's wars everywhere, of course, there have been wars everywhere. There's earthquakes everywhere, of course, there's always been earthquakes everywhere.

So we can get all worried about this and miss what's going on. And yet what does Jesus say even in the midst of all that? Do not be terrified. Do not be terrified. These things must happen.

So what is he really addressing when he shakes them all up with this apocalyptic talk? Well, what were they talking about just before he goes into this address? How did it all begin today? It said that while some people were speaking about the temple, how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings.

Basically they were saying, look how good it is, Lord. Look how good we have it. See the facade of the temple, how good it is. The outside of the temple shows us how beautiful things are. What are you doing coming and stirring things up that could have been in their heart? Probably was. It was in their heart for sure. It's in my heart. Look, things are going well. Why do you have to come and bring the end times?

And that's when again, Jesus will have none of that, none of what they were saying. And he launches into the description of devastation and woe, things that will come at the end of times.

He begins it all with crushing their complacency, their comfort, with how nice things look on the outside. And he says this, 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.

So what's the lesson for us? What is God trying to help us with? What can we see now? You know, these ladies and gentlemen never saw the end times. We may not either. But he was still trying to give them a lesson, and we need it too. So how much do I look at the facade, the outside, the appearance, and gauge how good things are by that? Only what I see.

"We've got a perfect house, dear. We finally are in the location we've always wanted to be. It's so nice. I've got the car of my dreams. I finally got it. We've got the best vacation plans we've ever had. How could it get any better?"

I'm getting the hottest new Nintendo Switch 2 for Christmas. Things are so good. Everyone thinks highly of me. I have such a great reputation among my colleagues, among my friends, my girlfriends at school, they all think I am so cool.

Or I am a priest who says liturgy perfectly. Isn't this so good? Everybody can see things look really good. God must be pleased with me."

Really, really. He says not a stone will be left upon a stone. What will be left when all that, all of what I just said may come crashing down at any moment? Maybe the end of times may not happen, but maybe I will lose my job. Maybe I'm going to move to a new school and I don't know any kids there.

Or maybe I already did that. Maybe this is here. Maybe that perfect boyfriend or girlfriend says I need my freedom. My health goes to pot. Anything could happen to tear it all down.

Or maybe it's coming from a different perspective. Not how good I have it, but how I'm looking at how good other people have it other than me. "Oh, I wish we were more like the Joneses over there". And I'm sorry, if there's any Joneses here today, it's always the Joneses.

"I wish I had the latest fashion like all the other girls. Or the latest toys like all the other boys. I wish I could preach like Father Josh".

How do I know how hard things are really going for those others that I think looked so good? Maybe I, with my seemingly more modest offerings, am experiencing things a lot easier in life than the one I am comparing myself to. Or rather, from the appearance of what I see in the other.

I don't even know what's going on. Is that all I want for myself? Just to look good? Just to appear to everyone that I am doing well? Is that all I am hoping for? What care should I have if someone says something bad about me if I know that's not true? Why should I even be worried about what others see or don't see? How much stock should I put in what things look like rather than what things really are? What really is going on?

Note that our first reading today from the prophet Malachi speaks of the day when the Lord comes blazing like an oven for evildoers, setting them on fire. But he also speaks of the sun of justice with its healing rays for those who are seeking good.

And I don't think I have to explain to anybody that the sun is a blazing ball of fire. So what it means is that we're all going to get burned. Fire is coming. Fire is happening right now. But for those who are on the inside are corrupt, even if it all appears good on the outside, there won't be anything left, not a stone upon another when the fire comes. But for those desiring to do God's will, no matter the cost, no matter what other people think is going on, or my appearance before others, the flames will purify us and make the inside even more brilliant and stable so that we can handle things easier.

When more things do come. Jesus said, yeah, they will seize. They will persecute you. Maybe we won't be put to death, but we will not be liked. We will not necessarily, we will not be popular. We're not going to be popular teaching about Jesus. But it will lead to your giving testimony, he said.

And it doesn't just mean, even though he said, he will give you the words. That's very true. If we start practicing, we get the words to say. But it also isn't just about the words. It means your life will be a testimony. Jesus said, by your perseverance, you will secure your lives and you will give testimony to what is truly on the inside.

And how do you do this? Not just by the appearance, but by your patience, by your perseverance. In fact, I've been reading St. Catherine of Siena, going through it really slow, the dialogues. And the Father says to her, that is the virtue that tells you you got all the virtues, patience. If you're able to exercise that, then all the other virtues are going on. It's a real indicator.

So what does Paul say today? He spoke of working in toil and drudgery. Being an example of perseverance in front of everybody. And he says he is a model to imitate. That's what you and I are supposed to be.



You are supposed to be a model for others to imitate, not from what they see on the outside, but the authentic reality of what's going on inside. The hard work that you're doing to build up virtue, no matter how long it takes, should be apparent to those who really are seeking. I should be working quietly, not minding the business of others, as if I could really see into their hearts. That's not possible. All I can see is the outside unless they reveal to me the heart.

Many things that seem so glorious now are not going to be so later, when the fire comes. And many things that appear humble and without any value to the world now are going to last forever. Forever and ever. So let us persevere and secure our lives by working quietly on the things that really matter.

Even if nobody else takes notice, God always takes notice. Then we won't have to be caught up in any worry about end times, because there will be no end time for you or for me. We will be forever with the Lord, in perfect bliss and in total contentedness. My brothers and sisters, let us continue this good work, and today, let us begin it for a little one that's going to be a saint in just a few minutes. And let us also seek to be saints through this life and perseverance so that we can be with God forever.

Amen.