



November 16, 2025

Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

"...there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays."

Malachi 3:20a



Dear Friends,

There is an oft quoted proverb attributed to the Medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. *"All good things must come to an end."* It means that nothing lasts forever and enjoyable experiences are temporary. It is even used to console people, reminding them that even bad things will come to an end. It can give rise to hope.

As we approach the end of the liturgical year, the liturgy reminds us that all things will come to an end. For Christians endings always give way to new beginnings. We await the transformation of the old world into the image of the risen Christ. But in order to be transformed, something old has to come to an end, things must change, and something dies. We proclaim that death is the threshold to a new life in God.

Malachi's *"Day of the Lord"* is not just about punishment or endings. It is about purification for renewal. It is about the dawn of a new day when the sun of righteousness will shine with divine healing. Fire can destroy but it can also purify. The community of Israel has been compromised but it is being reshaped into something new. The rising sun of righteousness is not annihilation. It is the dawn of a new community formed in justice, mercy, compassion and love. This is not about individual punishment but a collective conversion. The people learn to be centered in the love of God.

In our day, we tend to read everything from the perspective of the individual. This clouds our understanding of Paul's letters to his Christian communities. Paul is concerned with the good order of the community. There is a place for everything and everyone and everything in its proper place. Disorderly behavior is a threat to the harmony of the community. When Paul says *"if anyone will not work, neither should they eat"* can sound harsh if it is read individualistically.

But he is concerned with the ecclesial, the community that is Christ's body. In the body everyone contributes for the good of all. Paul is not attacking the unemployed. He is warning against becoming disengaged and self-absorbed. In the long wait for the Lord's return, some have stopped contributing to the life of the community. They became passive spectators rather than active participants. What Paul envisions is a church community marked by mutual responsibility and shared work. Everyone uses their gifts so that no one is burdened. All share in building God's kingdom now. Where is God calling us as a community to renew our part of the world?

Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the Temple is not just an apocalyptic warning. It is a social-political and religious shock. The Temple was the center of the people's identity. Its fall meant that the whole community would have to reimagine their understanding of God in their midst. What Jesus describes is not only an historical ruin but a communal transformation. God's dwelling is no longer confined to a building—it will be found in a people, the Body of Christ.

Many are afraid of the present. This is why they are trying to recreate the past: lots of kneeling, chapel veils, baroque devotions. The institutions, customs, and comforts we have built up are crumbling. We can't go back; it is a type of death. But in the loss God invites us to discover the heart of discipleship. We are a *living temple*, a people who together bear witness through endurance and hope. Pope Francis gave us a new image to reflect the meaning of church. He calls us a *"field hospital"* that administers the medicine of mercy. We find God here and now not in the past. We find God now in loving, healing, and forgiving. So, let's get to work.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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