

33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

By Al Mansfield

Malachi 3:19-20

Psalm 98

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Luke 21:5-19

THE DAY IS COMING

It's that time again in the liturgical year when we hear about the end of things - the end of the Temple, the end of Jerusalem, and the end of time. At the same time, we look forward to the coming of the Lord and his kingdom. As the Responsorial, Psalm 98, says: "The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice."

MALACHI

Our first reading is from Malachi, considered to be the last of the Old Testament prophets. The name Malachi means "my messenger." This prophetic book levels some sharp reproaches against the priests and rulers of the people.

Malachi prophesies that "the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble and the day that is coming will set them on fire, leaving them neither root nor branch, says the Lord of hosts."

However, Malachi also prophesies healing and justice for those who fear the name of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Our gospel today from Luke is Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple..."the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Then comes the all-important question - *when*? Jesus responds with a warning against deception - actually, one of a number of warnings that he gives against being deceived. Jesus goes into some detail, saying "for many will come in my name saying 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them!" (Notice that Jesus does say *many*.)

The Lord also predicts wars and political turmoil, as well as "earthquakes, famines, and plagues," including "awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky."

Then there is an especially challenging prediction of persecution. Today's gospel ends with a word of hope and encouragement: "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." May God grant us all the all-important grace of perseverance!

2 THESSALONIANS

In today's second reading, St. Paul gives instructions about how we should conduct ourselves as we await the coming of the Lord. This is the place where Paul states his famous principle that "if anyone is unwilling to work neither should that one eat."

St. Paul comes down hard on those who, instead of keeping busy minding their own affairs, stick their noses in everyone else's business. Paul says, "Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food."

GOOD NEWS AT THE END

The Alleluia Verse gives us a strong word of hope and encouragement as we prepare for the Lord's Second Coming, found only in Luke's gospel (21:23): "Stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand." Let it be!