

Do you believe God's word? Lk 21: 5-19, 17 Nov 19 – 33rd Sun in Ord Time 4:00 PM & 7:30 AM

Intro

Good (**afternoon / morning**) my brothers and sisters in Christ. The theme of my homily is

Do you believe in the eternal value of God's word?

In the world of retail, we have seen signs announcing the coming of Christmas, picking up momentum after Halloween. But in the Liturgical year, we have the New Year first and then Christmas. So I am here to “plug” the upcoming Liturgical Year close out. Only 13 more days until the end of the Liturgical Year. Holy Mother Church has given us the gift of the Liturgical Year. It begins with Advent and concludes with the Solemnity of Christ the King. In a cycle of three years of Sundays, we will hear a large portion of the four gospels. Next week will conclude Year C (emphasis on Luke) . When you think about it, in a year's time we journey with Jesus in the following way:

We prepare for His coming , His Birth , the beginning of his ministry , the end of his ministry , The gift of the Eucharist , His Crucifixion and Resurrection, the mission of discipleship , and our anticipation to meet Him face to face in our own judgment and his second coming

So we begin and end with the anticipation of His coming

The impact of the Word of the Lord (as with our worship and Life in the Lord) is constant, **it has no beginning and has no end The Word has saved our ancestors in the past, The Word saves us today and the Word will continue to save us for all eternity**

It is interesting to note that our Jewish brothers and sisters celebrate a beginning and end of a liturgical year. This year it occurred in October. It is called, ‘Simchat Torah’

It is a Jewish holiday that celebrates and marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings (first five books), and the beginning of a new cycle. It is a Joyous celebration... the last portion of Deuteronomy and the first portion of Genesis are read in the synagogue.

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Our Jewish brethren believe in the past, present and future salvation as expressed by scripture and the Passover.... Sounds similar to what we believe in the past, present and future salvation as expressed by scripture and the Eucharist?

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Body

In our first reading from Malachi (occurs after the temple was rebuilt in about 500 BC) , the prophet issues a warning to evildoers 'that a day of Judgment is coming' . Most of the people believe that Malachi is calling out Israel's wicked neighbors, but Malachi is calling out priests and the people of Israel for being lax. They are lax in their worship, have defrauded widows and orphans and have no respect (fear) for God. Malachi urges them to repent and turn to the Lord and you will be saved .There will be a dawning of a new day when the Lord returns with his healing rays.

In Gospel today, Luke tells us that Jesus is in the temple. He is speaking to his disciples in public one last time before his passion. This is the period after Palm Sunday and before Holy Thursday. They are admiring the beauty and magnificence of the temple. Like Malachi Jesus is really telling the people be on guard and to look for the signs of the end like:

- False Prophets
- Wars and tumults
- Natural Disasters

Like the prophet Malachi, Jesus speaks of a time to come that will bring great turmoil. It will be a time of trial for those who follow Jesus. Families, religious and political institutions are capable of persecuting you. You will be hated and some will be put to death.

Not exactly rainbows and unicorns or your favorite Hallmark movie.

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Like Malachi, Jesus is telling His followers that in the end, God will return and conquer evil once and for all. Unlike Malachi, What Jesus is telling us is that:

He is the hope..... Hope for the world.

Jesus tells us that when the trial comes, do not have a great plan prepared ahead of time as he will give us the wisdom to speak **the truth** that others will not resist or refute. Jesus is calling us to trust Him with our lives, and his promise that he will preserve us, not in the sense of this temporal world, but in the eternal domain of heaven.

When we say, "**Jesus I trust in you**" it helps us to see the Lord in every situation and circumstance and acknowledge the Lord's control over the universe and eternity. When we see events from this perspective, adverse circumstances become moments of growth. Fear will lose its grip on you. The more we speak and live this, it will strengthen our relationship with the Lord.

I teach ESL Citizenship Class and the students are learning about the 20th and 21st centuries. I routinely show short clips from YouTube to illustrate American History. Recently I showed them a clip of the speech that Dr MLK made on April 3 1968, the day before he lost his life. Before he arrived in Memphis, he was made aware of the threats made against his life. Listen to the words of MLK's speech, and see if you can discern today's Gospel. Here is an excerpt from his last speech

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will.

I believe DR King believed **in the eternal value of God's word?**

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Closing

We are about six weeks from closing out the calendar year. Many of us will reflect on the past year of 2019.

- How is our financial and physical health?
- Did we add any babies to our family? What family members passed away?
- Do we need to change our priorities for the upcoming year?

As we are about to 'close out 'the Liturgical Year , I invite you to review 'your' liturgical year from 2 Dec 18 (from the beginning of last Advent) to 30 Nov 19 (to the close of Ordinary time). I invite you to do a self-examination of how your walk with the Lord is going?

- How is our spiritual health? Did we see the Lord's presence in our lives?
- Were there points of trial, did we **go through the trials** or **grow through the trials**?
- Are we bringing people to Christ by our prayer life and actions? In our families, in our neighbors? In our parish?

In our family, we have a tradition called the Christmas Letter. It is a one page summary of our families' year. Sue and I have been doing to for over 30 years. Kind of neat in that we have a family history not just of schools and vacations, change of jobs and retirement, births and deaths, but also the times the Lord pulled us through many circumstances.

This is the time of the year we need to reflect within ourselves and our families: Are we taking the truths that Jesus gives us and applying it in our lives? Do our lives reflect on ongoing preparation to meet the Lord today and in the future?

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Amen

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<https://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Index-Sundays.htm>

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/christ-the-king-bulletin-insert.cfm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simchat_Torah

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>