

33<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Sunday  
November 17, 2019  
“The End Times”

Mal 3:19-20  
2 Thes 3:7-12  
Lk 21:5-19

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

We live in truly uncertain times. The Radical Islamists are spreading havoc wherever and whenever they can. They even massacre others of the Muslim faith. So-called “Rogue Nations” are doing all they can to acquire nuclear weapons. Many countries are struggling economically. Our own nation is bitterly divided politically. Our Church continues to suffer effects of the wounds perpetrated upon the innocent. And we wonder when and if things will ever get better!

Are we drawing close to the “End Times”? There are many who think we are. Indeed the visionaries of Garabandal and Medjugorje speak of coming, terrible events that will change the course of the world. No one knows for certain when the End Times will come – However, Jesus, himself, predicts them, and the scriptures for today tell us how to live in those times when they occur.

The prophet Malachi teaches us that evil and its malefactors will not escape the wrath of God. God knows all and sees all. He knows our hidden misdeeds and even the secrets of our hearts. He also knows our conversion, our repentance, and the good works we do. While the evil ones will be destroyed, the good will be healed and warmed by the sun of justice with its life-giving love!

What is important for us to remember is not to become vengeful and vindictive. We must not retaliate for the wrongs done to us. Otherwise, we become no different from those who injured us in the first place. The Lord our God is the “Great Equalizer” – “What goes around, comes around” – if not in this life, then, certainly, in the next!

In the Gospel of St. Luke, Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem – and then jumps to the End Times for the rest of humanity. When Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD, the city was destroyed and the Temple reduced to rubble. The few survivors were dispersed throughout the Middle East and Europe. However, Christians who resided there escaped beforehand. They realized what was happening and left before the siege began. This enabled the Gospel

of Jesus to be spread far and wide, wherever they went!

However, no one living will escape the End Times when they happen. Christians will be persecuted for what they believe and for their religious practice. They will even be betrayed by family and friends. This has already begun in the Middle East where believers have been tortured, mutilated, and executed by Al-Qaida and the Taliban for the last several years. Those persecuted in any way, just last year, number 215 million world-wide!

In our own country, which is becoming more and more godless each day, Christian belief and morality are under constant assault from proposed legislation which affects business practice and hiring protocol. Those who champion the LGBTQ community cannot understand, and speak against, our belief in traditional marriage and sexual morality. Furthermore, our educational system, our culture, and the entertainment industry continue to erode what our youth were taught to believe!

So, how do we live? How do we prepare for the End Times whenever they come? With Jesus, we always stand fast. We always persevere in our beliefs and religious practice. And, as St. Paul insists, we continue on with our daily lives. We work hard to provide for ourselves and for those who are our responsibility. Above all, we don't waste time, stir up trouble, and expect others or the government to provide for our basic needs at someone else's expense!

Brothers and Sisters, we certainly do live in trying times. We don't know what the near or distant future will bring – good or bad. But we can live Christian lives, keep the Gospel always before us, and stand fast in God's presence. For then, we will be ready for the Lord Jesus whenever he comes for us alone – or for the world!

Amen.

November 17, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra