

**33RD SUNDAY - ORDINARY TIME (C)**  
**BY YOUR ENDURANCE YOU WILL GAIN YOUR LIVES**

Which is more difficult to choose; doing good or wrong? To sin or not to sin? Why? Most of the time the desire to sin comes before the desire to do good. As the liturgical year, or the church's calendar is coming to a close, the readings will focus on the end time, and most especially, on how evil will be defeated and good life rewarded.

In our own days now, what was told to the early people of God should be reflected upon seriously. The prophet Malachi warned the people about what was going to happen to those who were arrogant and evildoers. What is the attitude of the proud? There would be no remnants of them. But the sun of justice with its healing rays will shine on those who fear the Lord. The wounds suffered due to their struggles to do what was right would be healed.

When people were thinking about the beauty and how strong the Temple was, Jesus told them what was going to happen to it in less than no time; its destruction. It was destroyed because of the disobedience of the Israelites and their arrogance. Then He revealed what would happen when the end would be approaching. It would be preceded by deceit, terrible signs, and persecution. Are we experiencing them? May be yes.

We always lament that there is evil around us, and we are not happy about it. How serious are we about solving these issues? What have we done and what can we do? Are we bothered at all? What about our own lives? How often do we see the evil in us? Do I see it as God sees it or do I see it with my own lenses?

Jesus told His disciples to be ready for persecution, but they should not be afraid. He said, "This will be a time for you to bear testimony". A testimony is our personal witness to what the Lord Jesus has done in our lives. How can we bear testimony at this time in our lives? Where are the faithful and dedicated Catholic Christians? Where can we find them? Many of us are like the false prophets Jesus warned His disciples about; 'You will know

them by their fruits', (Mt. 7:15-20). We are afraid to muddy the waters. It is difficult for us to accept our Catholic beliefs. How can we share them and let people also know and accept them? Even though Jesus has assured us of His support and guidance, we are very much afraid of what we are going to face. He tells us "By your endurance you will gain your lives". Endurance is the patience which never gives up hope, never yields to despair or hatred. Do we want to suffer to gain, or gain to suffer? There are two enemies to fight and overcome; the evil within us, and the one in the world which has great influence on us. The world is deceiving us with mirage images of happiness.

The believers in Thessalonica thought the world was coming to an end immediately, and thus were expecting Jesus to come soon; because of that they stopped working; some were idling about. We have also gone to the extremes (as they did) thinking that the end is not near at all, and there is no need to check our way of life. We often forget about the consequences of our actions and inactions as Christians.

The struggle to overcome sin and to do good is not experienced by one person. It has been experienced, and is experienced, and will be experienced by every human being. St. Paul shares his experience, and answers the question I asked in the beginning; "I do not do the good that I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do.... My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a different law at work in my body - a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. What an unhappy man I am Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 7:19-25).

Jesus will help us to endure all hardships and overcome the evil within and without. We need to rely on His grace. This is because the devil himself knows that his time is limited; (Mt. 8:28-29; Mk. 1:21-24). The choices we make now - for or against Christ - will either lead us on the path of life or death - heaven or hell.