

33rd Sunday of the Year C

*For you who fear my name,
the sun of righteousness will shine out
with healing in its rays. (Ml 3:20)*



First Reading

Malachi 3:19-20

The day is coming now, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and evil-doers will be like stubble. The day that is coming is going to burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, leaving them neither root nor stalk. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays.

Second Reading

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

You know how you are supposed to imitate us: now we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we ever have our meals at anyone's table without paying for them; no, we worked night and day, slaving and straining, so as not to be a burden on any of you. This was not because we had no right to be, but in order, to make ourselves an example for you to follow.

We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any work. Now we hear that there are some of you who are living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we order and call on people of this kind to go on quietly working and earning the food that they eat.

Gospel

Luke 21:5-19

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All these things you are staring at now – the time will come when not a single stone will be left on

another: everything will be destroyed." And they put to him this question: "Master," they said "when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?"

"Take care not to be deceived," he said "because many will come using my name and saying, 'I am he' and, 'The time is near at hand.' Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon." Then he said to them, "Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name – and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives."

Meditation

Obsession with an end of the world is not alien to our times. We too fear cosmic upheavals and cataclysms of every sort. The means of nuclear catastrophe plays a significant part in this preoccupation. More than one recent author and several films have described extreme events as if the end of the world were at the door.

Every age has had doomsayers who announce the imminence of the parousia based on the wars and upheavals of the time. The possibility that Christians might be deceived by their predictions already disturbed Luke. He set out the alternate view of Christian vigilance. Although the destruction of the temple in the year 70 seemed to forebode the end of the world, the ruin of Jerusalem did not bring about the fulfilment of time. The necessary prelude to the catastrophes which will signal the end of time is the persecution of Jesus' disciples. These persecutions will provide the opportunity for exercising that perseverance which alone obtains life, that constancy in faith which is necessary in any period of history.