

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – (C)
(Malachi 3:19-20 / Luke 21:5-19)
13.11.2022

Your endurance will win you your lives

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have just heard in today's gospel passage a description of what will happen at the end of time: the picture painted is quite dark and even terrifying. You remember: the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, wars and revolutions, earthquakes, plagues and famines, fearful sights and great signs from heaven, arrests, persecutions and imprisonments, betrayals by loved ones, hate and killings...

The description given here is not a description of what will happen later on. This is a description of what is happening now, because we are already in the end of time. So we should not be surprised that what is happening today among us is also quite dark and even terrifying: the Covid 19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and in so many other places, natural disasters of all sorts, the huge economic crisis with the consequence for so many who are unable to make ends meet, the reappearance of excessive nationalisms, so many marriage bonds broken, so many religious vows or promises not honoured, so many public engagements not respected...

Yet it remains that today's gospel passage is good news for us here and now! Where is the good news? Perhaps we have to read, or better to listen to our text right up until its last line: "Your endurance will win you your lives", that is to say your perseverance will win you your lives. Jesus never promised us an easy life. Life is made up of trials and tribulations of all sorts, multiple challenges and difficulties. Jesus invites us to make our way through all these obstacles remaining faithful to our vocation in life.

Fidelity to our vocation in life! What does this mean? Let us take the example of the promises made by the bride and the bridegroom on the day of their wedding or the promises made by religious on the day of their profession. These are not promises that have to be made one day and forgotten the following. These are promises that have to be made one day and renewed every morning, each and every day of their lives. Those who made vows have to allow their promises to guide their life choices and decisions continually. Their endurance, their perseverance, their fidelity to their vocation, whatever this vocation may be, will win them their lives.

This is true for each one of us, for each one of our lives. Our endurance will win us our lives. We all have a vocation in life. We have all made promises. Let us think of our baptismal promises, our promises on the day of our wedding or of our religious engagements, our promises linked with our professional duties: be that in the health service, or as teachers, or lawyers or business people; let us think of our solidarity with and respect for all human beings, whatever their age, their gender, their sexual orientation, their skin colour, children and vulnerable adults included. Each morning

should be a new beginning with the renewal of our promises which will inspire us during the day. The reminder of the promises we have made will inspire us. It will show us how to manage our way through all the trials life reserves for us. Our fidelity to our vocation in life will win us our lives.

In this spiritual combat, we are not alone; Christ is with us, he who is victorious over sin and death and offers us a share in his victory. This is the main part of the good news heard today..

The prophet Malachi whom we heard in our first reading had already predicted this mysterious presence by our side: “For you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays”. ‘The fear of the name of the Lord’ is a loving and continual awareness of the presence of the Lord by our side, who shows us the path of life. If we remain attentive and docile to the presence of the Lord by our side, “our endurance will win you your lives”.

In today’s gospel passage, Jesus tells us: when you come into trials, “you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself still give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict”. Yes, we are not alone. God accompanies and guides us through his word and his wisdom. If we remain attentive and obedient to God’s Word and Wisdom, we shall be able to cope with, and manage to make our way through all the trials we are likely to face in our lives.

Let us strive to remain faithful to our vocation in life day after day. Let us strive to remain aware of the presence of the Lord Jesus by our side day after day. Let us allow him to inform our choices and decisions. Our endurance will win us our lives.