

33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)
Through Our Perseverance, We Secure Our Lives
Mal. 3:19-20A; Psalm 98:5-6,7-8,9; 2 Thess. 3:7-12; Luke 21:5-19

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As the liturgical year comes to a close, our readings prompt us to think about a question asked for centuries: "If there is an end to all things, how should we live?" Reflecting on the wisdom of our Lord Jesus is valuable when answering this question. He said, "By your perseverance, you will secure your lives" (Luke 21:17-19). But how do we live in a way that perseveres?

Let's draw wisdom from our readings this weekend. They reflect what we already know. The first reading emphasizes living with hope, the second highlights living with accountability, and the gospel guides our thoughts toward joyful anticipation of the Lord's return.

First, let's remember to live with hope instead of fear. Prophet Malachi speaks of 'the day of the Lord,' a day that feels like fire to the wicked but like the rising sun to the faithful. He warns, 'For the day is coming, blazing like an oven when all the proud and all the evildoers will be stubble' (Mal 3:19). He reminds us that when judgment comes, those ungodly people—those who live in lies, deception, greed, and corruption—will face their end. However, those who live righteously and trust in God will experience healing and redemption (cf. Mal 3:20). There is a promise of healing and redemption for the faithful. So, fear is not the Christian response to the end of the world. Hope is. We hold on to hope because the end of the world is not the end of God. If God remains faithful, why should we fear?

The greatest tragedy isn't the end of the world but living as if God doesn't matter—living without the Lord Jesus—chasing fleeting things instead of eternal ones. When we live with hope, we live with purpose: we don't put off goodness; we don't delay forgiveness; we don't wait to love; we don't refuse to live in charity. Life is short, so live with purpose. When we die tomorrow, what beautiful memories will we take with us? So, when people scare us with predictions, dates, and conspiracy theories, let us remember that when we live with purpose, our focus is not "When will the world end?" but "How will God find my heart when everything ends?"

Second, living with accountability is a fundamental part of our Christian faith. It involves taking responsibility for our actions, possessions, and relationships. In the second reading, St. Paul addresses the Thessalonians, who had stopped working because they believed the end of the world was near. He rebukes them for their complacency and disorderly conduct, saying, 'If anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat' (2 Thes. 3:10). This is not a harsh command but a reminder that the Christian way is not to escape reality but to face it. The end of the world is no excuse for irresponsibility, passivity, or laziness. As Christians, we prepare for the future not by neglecting our daily duties but by staying faithful in the present, being accountable for our actions and decisions.

As faithful followers, our hope for heaven should motivate us to be more responsible on earth, not taking things for granted. St. Carlo Acutis, a modern example of a faithful Christian, once said, 'I am happy to die because I have lived my life without wasting even a minute on things unpleasing to God.' His words remind us not to be lured by the glitter of the world, not to be deceived by dishonest influences and fleeting comfort, nor to be discouraged by life's trials. Instead, we are called to live responsibly and faithfully — to pray constantly, work honestly, and help others with love.

Live with joyful anticipation of the Lord's return. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks honestly: There will be wars. There will be earthquakes. There will be plagues, persecution, betrayal, insurrections, and confusion. These languages of destruction are not meant to scare us. They are apocalyptic images intended to reveal something beautiful. They aim to help us realize that the powers governing our

world—such as dishonesty, deception, corruption, and the destructive force of sin—will one day come to an end. So, our response is not panic, but perseverance. It is not to escape, but endurance. Not despair, but joyful anticipation as followers of Jesus.

The world may end, but God's love endures. The world may pass away, but God's promise remains. The world may shock and shake us, but God never abandons us. Our Lord Jesus is already victorious over the destructive effects of sin through his passion, death, and resurrection. Indeed, this is what we celebrate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is a celebration of God's redeeming works. He remains victorious. He remains Emmanuel, God with us. We will once again receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. It is our Lord Jesus, a constant and unwavering presence in our lives.

Our Lord Jesus helps us persevere. Our goal is to cultivate perseverance by living with hope rather than fear, being accountable, and embracing joyful anticipation of the Lord's return. Let these principles guide our daily lives, shaping our actions and attitudes as we wait for the return of our Lord.

Through God's grace and our perseverance, we will secure our lives (Luke 21:19).

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