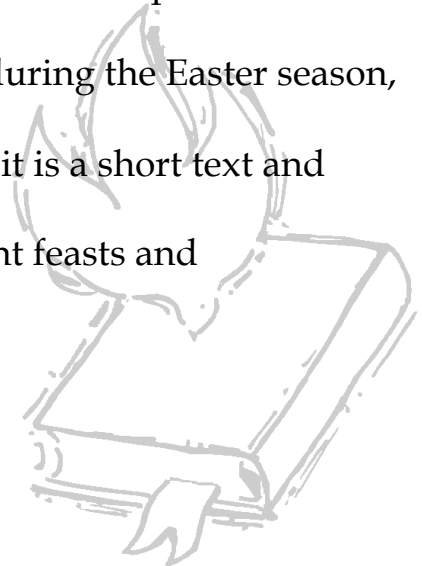


Homily
33rd Sunday OT – C
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
November 15-16, 2025

Mal 3: 19-20
Ps 98: 5-6, 7-8, 9
2 Thes 3: 7-12
Lk 21: 5-19

So we are coming close to the end of our three year cycle of readings that give us a sampling from the four gospel renderings of Jesus' life and a brief overview from the rest of the bible. During this journey, the Liturgical Year begins each year on the Sunday falling on, or closest to, the Feast of St. Andrew – November 30th (this year, November 30th falls on a Sunday, so the new liturgical year begins on that date). We are at the end of our journey through the Gospel of Luke, which we call "Cycle C" during Ordinary Time. On November 30th, we go back to the "Cycle A" readings and the Gospel of Matthew. Next year, the Liturgical Year begins on November 29th, where we will focus on the Gospel of Mark and so on, The gospel of John primarily is read during the Easter season, a few weeks during the Gospel of Mark because it is a short text and throughout the entire year in all kinds of different feasts and celebrations.



For those who assembled these Sunday readings, outside of the Easter Season, the theme which we read from the Old Testament (first reading) often is fulfilled in our gospel reading during our Sunday Masses. For those who assembled the gospels, their intent was that if we attend Mass every Sunday for three years, starting with the first Sunday of Advent working all the way through the following November, we will have a general idea of what the Bible is trying to teach us.

Towards this end, we have talked about the various themes of the three gospels. The gospel Matthew focuses as a type of “textbook of faith” that a good Jewish Christian needs to follow; the Gospel of Mark focuses on a type of “Messianic Secret” that those within the “inner circle” of faith cannot understand, similar to what happens with many in today’s society. The gospel of John focuses on what is called “Christology,” namely who Jesus rather than what Jesus does.

Then we have this year’s gospel focusing on the writings of St. Luke, which the author presents as a type of “history,” according to the first century understanding of that term. The gospel of Luke happens to be the only writing about our Lord where the author writes a “sequel,”

namely the Acts of the Apostles. Luke's writings focus on the work of the Holy Spirit, which entered the womb of the Blessed Mother, revealing himself at our Lord's baptism, driving Jesus to the desert and through his life, leaving Jesus at the time of his crucifixion and ascending upon the apostles at the time of Pentecost in the sequel to the gospel, sending the disciples to the corners of the earth.

The theme from Luke's gospel that is dearest to me focuses on the theme of "radical discipleship," taking this message to those who are outcast, against whom are discriminated and who often are disparaged by the community at large. Luke's history teaches us that this way of promoting the gospel message would make enemies in the faith, especially because those whom the disciples in Acts approach were disparaged by the community at large (the US Bishops gathered in Baltimore, Maryland to write a statement about immigration this week that might put some people off in our country; this statement is included in this week's bulletin).

Essentially, Luke teaches us that the radical disciple will go out to the peripheries and extremes of this world to welcome those who are not

welcomed by others and by those who might not welcome the radical disciples. As we read, when St. Paul ventured into unchurched territories, he was called a traitor by his own Jewish clerics, was not trusted by the Christians he oppressed in his life and was beaten, stoned and eventually executed by the outsiders to whom he ministered.

You might say that this type of oppression might not happen today as it did back then but this kind of oppression happens in our local communities on a constant basis – the “kill the messenger” mentality is just as alive today as it was in Jeremiah’s time or even two thousand years ago! It happens locally in our local parishes. It happens throughout the regions we serve, and we also realize that no matter how often we preach Christ crucified, there are going to be detractors and those filled with hate who are going to focus on what they want rather than what God tells us to do. Those who hate do not focus on God; they replace God’s will with their own and constantly in Luke’s gospel, Jesus tells us what happens when we fall away from the straight and narrow path... and God gets the last word in that discussion!

The gospel of Luke is very specific about those who do not live the life of the beatitude. Woe to the happy, woe to the popular, woe to the rich and woe to the fat (like me). The gospel of Luke tells us the price that we pay for falling away from God. The gospel of Luke also tells us, specifically in today's reading, that when we attach ourselves to God, then the Lord will guide us to what we understand is the "new" Jerusalem, not the one that is a constant battle among factions for centuries on earth but the one in heaven that is free from the evils that tempt us on the earth; this is the theme from the first treating according to Malachi (the last book of the Old Testament).

When we attach ourselves to this new Messiah who is going to guide us to a new Jerusalem, others will challenge us and question us; sometimes others try to destroy us and sometimes we try to destroy ourselves by becoming that obstacle that prohibits us from seeing God. We are taught in the scriptures that the radical disciple will be beaten down. The radical disciple will be attacked by people who attach themselves to human values rather than following the way of God. The last of the Lucan beatitudes tells us as much: "Blessed are you when

they insult you and persecute you and ever every kind of evil against you falsely because of me; rejoice and be glad for your award will be great in heaven.”

Luke’s gospel tells the radical disciple that the Lord shall give the people of faith a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. To go further, Luke’s gospel tells is that the radical disciple will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, perhaps even going further by parishioners and non-parishioners, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed for by your perseverance, you will secure your lives. We learn that the radical disciple embraces the gospel message, knowing full well that those who are obsessed by the human things of life the money and power instead of the humility and prayer that humanity obsesses about one set of values while God guides us to live the opposite way.

We also learn in Luke’s gospel that no matter how much people are going to attack you... and they *will* attack you (Lord knows they have attacked me, for that is the way of the world), this lot will have to

answer to God for what they do and the radical disciple is obligated out of love to forgive them, something not easy to do but essential if we wish to reach the new Jerusalem.

For this reason, not many in our community think about pursuing the priesthood or religious life; our society conditions itself to disparage this way of life in the media and in our communities, trying to justify their actions as righteous, when, in the eyes of God, they are doing just the opposite. Over and over again, this is the story of the prophets in the Old Testament and the disciples in the new – Jeremiah preached a message of penance and the people responded by trying to kill Jeremiah. Eleven of the twelve apostles preached Christ crucified and lost their lives in the process.

The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a classic example on one group of people trying to disparage the other, only to find their roles reversed when they leave this world. That is the story of the poor man who says, “Forgive me Lord, for I am a sinner” has more meaning than the rich man who mocks the poor man in the Gospel of Luke.

In the gospel of Luke, the author tells us that if we wish to be like “Theophilus” (“The Lover of God”), then we must allow the Holy Spirit to grow within us; we should not put a basket over the Holy Spirit. We should not have obstacles in our lives or to allow human temptation of power, riches or fame become those obstacles – those thing will prevent us from seeing how to get to heaven.

Rather, if the Holy Spirit shines within us, then we must allow the Spirit to lead us *to* the cross and *through* the cross. The Spirit will lead us into the fire, and through human persecution as well. Mind you, the apostles in the First Century, so many disciples in the early centuries, even up to this day, have been persecuted, have been beaten down, have been martyred for the cause of the faith, but, as the Gospel of Luke teaches us, by their perseverance, they will secure their lives... and we can do the same if we live the same way. Do good, avoid evil, sell everything you have and follow me. Those who cling to money will soon find out what God has in store for them.

For those who live in humility, who live poor in Spirit, who extend themselves to the peripheries of the world and live the gospel message

according to the Lucan parameters, everything will be provided for them on the other side of life. We learn that story in the parable of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the prodigal son in Luke's gospel. The beauty of the prodigal son parable is that when people fall away, when people do not follow the ways of God, God always gives them an opportunity to come back, confess their sins, and redeem their lives.

Let God cleanse you, let the Church cleanse you and me so that we can start anew. That is the beauty of the confessional, of all those people who take advantage of that sacrament by telling God and the community that they have done wrong and then wanting to get back on the right track. That is what I am supposed to do as the leader, knowing very well that if I preach this message, there will be resistance. In some communities where I preach it, it is very well received (the Phillipis or today's age), and in some communities where I preach it, I get reviled (like Corinth or Galatia). That is part of the deal of being an evangelist.

I remind myself that the letters to the Thessalonians tell us to live as if today is your last day on earth, to live as you are preparing for the kingdom of heaven today, and then do it the same tomorrow and every

day after that. If we understand that message through these three years of scripture readings, then we understand what God expects of us.

If we go through the motions, if we just do all the rituals that we are told but do not have love, if we spend all our time in the vestibule of the Church instead of praying in Church so that God can speak to us in the silence, then we are nothing but a noisy gong and a clinging symbol, and that symbol will not be heard through the doors of heaven. Let us live correctly. Let us live like Christ. I will sacrifice for your sake. Please sacrifice for mine so that all of us can help each other get to the other side or in the end, by perseverance all of us will secure our lives and share that lives full of the Spirit with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.