

GOOD VS EVIL



Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

There is a battle going on between good and evil, but we already know the outcome. Christ has already won during his Passion, Death, and Resurrection. But the battle continues to be played out and will be played out until the end of time. Good for us that we know who the Victor is: Jesus. All evil will be conquered even if for a little while it looks like it is winning or will win. Again and again, Scripture assures us that even if we have to endure persecution because of our faith, in the end we will be vindicated. For some who are persecuted for their faith, that vindication might be in the next life. Whether the persecution be long or short, the important thing to remember is that Jesus will win, all evil will be conquered, and no matter what happens we have every reason to hope and believe in Jesus and in his victory.

In both the first reading (Mal 3:19-20a) and the Gospel today (Luke 21:5-19), we see this hope. In the first reading we heard about the destruction of evil: *the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble, And the day that is coming will set them on fire, leaving them neither root nor branch.* (Mal 3:19)

Then we heard God's promise for those who are on his side: *But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays.* (Mal 3:20)

We also see hope beyond persecution in the Gospel today (Luke 21:5-19) as Jesus tells the disciples about the persecutions of his followers that would take place before the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. Today you can still see some of those stones thrown down as Jesus said they would be. Jesus said his disciples would be seized and persecuted, put in prison, and some of them would be put to death. But Jesus said, "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." (Luke 21:19)

For us here in this country, thank God, we do not have to endure such persecution. But there is misunderstanding of our Catholic faith and consequently discrimination sometimes even in this country. In the Land of the Free, sometimes we even have to stand up for our freedom of religion and freedom to believe our creed and not be forced to act against our conscience. We have heard of some, in the medical and other professions, who have had to surrender their career in order not to be forced to act contrary to our Catholic faith or who paid some other price for remaining faithful. They are fulfilling the words of Jesus in our Gospel today: "It will lead to your giving testimony." (Luke 21:13) We do not have persecution like in other countries, but even in the Land of the Free some have had to make sacrifices in order to remain faithful to Christ. They are Catholic heroes.

Have a Blessed Sunday!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

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