

HOMILY for 33th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

This Sunday's Readings remind us about being ready for Judgement Day. Reflecting on that, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

A young preacher, assigned to a country church, was making visits to his new neighbors. "Do you belong to the Christian family?" he asked an old farmer.

"No," the man replied, "they live two farms down."

"What I mean is," the preacher continued, "are you lost in this world?"

"No, I've lived here for sixty years."

Exasperated, the preacher pressed on. "I mean, are you ready for Judgment Day?"

"When is that?" the farmer asked.

"It could be today or tomorrow!" the preacher exclaimed.

"Well," the farmer replied, "when you find out for sure, let me know. We don't get out much; so my wife & I will probably want to go both days!"

Anyway, as we approach the end of the liturgical year & another calendar year, the readings for this Sunday want to discuss with us about Judgement Day & prepare well for it. Here's how this Sunday's Gospel warns us about that day, "Some were speaking of how the temple was adorned with precious stones & votive offerings. Jesus said, 'These things you are contemplating – the day will come when not one stone will be left on another, but it will all be torn down. They asked Him, 'When will this occur, Teacher? And what will be the sign it's going to happen?'" As the public continued to get fixated on worldly things such as the charm & beauty of Jerusalem Temple, Jesus prophesized about its destruction, which happened some years later, & reminded everyone to prepare well for Judgement Day. That day could be the end of the world, or the end of a person, or in this case the end of an era with Jerusalem Temple. Keep in mind that this time Jesus did not give the public an exact time or details of that important day. However, on another occasion, He was asked about the same thing; & He said that only God the Father would know when that day might happen.

Meanwhile, in today's First Reading, prophet Malachi joined Jesus in giving the world another warning about getting ready for Judgement Day as following, "Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud & all evil doers will be stubble. And the day that is coming will set them on fire leaving them neither root nor branch, says the Lord of hosts. But, for you who fear my name, there will arrive the sun of justice with its healing rays." In other words, prophet Malachi wants to remind the world that Judgment Day will happen to hold the proud & evil doers accountable for their actions. For these folks thought that they could get away with all the bad things & evil acts that they did. They mistakenly assumed that they could outsmart God. Yet, God lets them know who is really in charge by making them answer for their past way of life on Judgement Day. And the Lord will certainly punish them severely. However, that day will be the vindication for the faithful because of all the sacrifices they did on earth. It will be the payday for anyone who obeyed God's Commandments & walked humbly with the Lord. For the Lord will reward them abundantly on that day.

While waiting for that important day, St. Paul admonishes us to do the following in today's Second Reading, "You know how you ought to imitate us. We did not live lives of disorder when we were among you, nor depend on anyone for food... We enjoy all such, & we urge them strongly in the Lord Jesus Christ to earn the food they eat by working quietly." So, St.

Paul asks us to avoid a disorderly life & work hard not only to earn daily living but also to stay on good terms with the Lord. Otherwise, we will not be able to look Jesus in the eyes on Judgement Day. Meanwhile, Jesus tells us that wars, natural disaster, & persecutions will happen before Judgement Day. But, do not be afraid or let those things rattle us. Rather, we should prepare ourselves well for that day. One of the best ways for us to do that is not to be misled by fake prophets or evil leaders in disguise according to our Lord. In fact, Jesus gave us this warning about that in this Sunday's Gospel as following, "Take care not to be misled. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he' & 'The time is at hand.' Do not follow them."

Unfortunately, the public is often so gullible & tends to follow wrong leaders. They pledge their allegiance to people who give them empty promises & abuse them in every way possible. Like a victim in an abusive relationship, they could not stand up against their abusers or find a new life outside of that bad environment. Sadly, we are now being misled by fake prophets & evil leaders in disguise in the Church & the country. They pretend to be conservative folks or devout Christians by holding up the Bible & quoting Scripture passages left & right; but their actions & ways of life do not match the one of our Lord Jesus & the Saints in our Christian tradition. They treat the poor & the social outcast without any Christian love & compassion. They pretend to be pro-life by taking a stand against abortion but do not hesitate to take a life of someone on death row or let a poor child die of disease or hunger without shedding any tears. They promise to do this or that for the public without really following through with it because they only look out for their own benefits in the end. They claim to follow Jesus' Commandments of love, but their actions are all about vengeance & full of hate. As someone who lived under the Communist system, I have learned how to evaluate a person or a true leader by simply looking at that person's actions & ways of life, not his/her fancy words & wonderful promises. That simple evaluation system has helped me avoid following wrong leaders or picking out bad people to be my friends or a member of my Parish Staff. So, I urge you to use the same system to choose your friends, spouses, employers/employees, & most importantly whom you would follow in the Church & the country by looking at one's actions & ways of life.

My dear brothers & sisters, most people believe in Judgement Day when God would hold everyone accountable for their actions & ways of life on earth. Today's Readings remind us about that important day by warning us to prepare well for it & live up to Jesus' Commandments of love & teachings. Moreover, we are cautioned to avoid fake prophets & evil leaders in disguise. Otherwise, we might end up in the wrong place or not be able to look Jesus in the eyes on Judgement Day by following the wrong leaders.