

November 13, 2022
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 21:5-19

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here--the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.

"Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends 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. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.

Background:

Luke is the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke's community would be familiar with both. Many of the things Jesus taught in the Gospel came to be fulfilled during the lifetime of the Christian community and are described in Acts, which was written about the year 80AD.

The people for whom Luke was writing had a much different sense of time than most Americans. They lived in the present and did not worry about preparing for the future ("Give us this day our daily bread"). The present had enough challenges to overcome without adding those of the future. Past events quickly faded in importance. It was up to God to hold the past and be attentive to the approaching future.

The prophets of the day were gifted with a glimpse into the mind and time of God. There were false prophets who believed God had given them some insight, but their insights turned out to be false. It was difficult to know which were the false and which were the true prophets until the unfolding of the foretold events actually did or did not come to pass. This reality influences how Luke presents Jesus to his readers. Luke portrays Jesus as a prophet whose words do come true. His followers should be reassured that their faith in Jesus is true and they have not been led astray by some false prophet.

The first verses of the text speak of the splendor of the temple. This temple was rebuilt when the Jews returned from being enslaved in Babylonia and was renovated under King Herod. After the renovations, the temple surpassed the splendor of the original built by Solomon and became a source of great pride among the Jews. In the second verse, Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple. It came to pass when Rome invaded Jerusalem in 70AD.

As important as the temple was for the people, this gospel is not about the destruction of the temple. Rather, the gospel is about the signs that will lead up the destruction of the temple and the whole of Jerusalem. Those events are "signs" because people will need someone to interpret their meaning. Jesus says that some who will come and say, "I am the one who can interpret these events for you" are mistaken. Jesus does not want the people to be misled. The signs themselves include the political and natural world. The disturbances in these arenas will lead to personal turmoil. Jesus' followers will endure suffering at the hands of the government,

neighbors, and even family. All suffer during this period; they suffer because they are Jesus' followers. Jesus urges them to persevere, trusting in Jesus, the one who correctly speaks the mind of God.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why do you think people were speaking about how the temple was adorned? What do you think the costly adornments meant for them?
2. Are you aware of examples of the same kind of thought process going on in our society? Do you find yourself thinking of things in a similar way at times?
3. Jesus gives two exhortations to people of his day in this gospel. (1) Do not be deceived! (2) do not be terrified! How is Jesus responding to the reality of the existence of true and false prophets of his day?
4. How is this gospel speaking to you and your lived reality?
5. Can you take some time to talk to God about whatever has come up within you as you read and reflected on this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for November 13, 2022, the Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and evildoers 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 arise the sun of justice with its healing rays.

The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Sing praise to the Lord with the harp and melodious song.

With trumpets and horn sing joyfully before the Lord.

Let the sea and what fills it resound, the world and those who dwell in it;

let the rivers clap their hands, and the mountains shout with them for joy.

For the Lord comes to rule the earth, He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with equity.

Brothers and sisters: You know how one must imitate us.

For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone.

On the contrary, in toil night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you.

We wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us.

In fact, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat.

We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way,

by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people

we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food.

While some were noting how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here--the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

They asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? What sign will there be?"

He answered, "Many will come, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them!

When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified;

for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end."

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place;

and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.

"Before all this happens, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony.

You are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

You will even be handed over by relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

You will be hated because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed.

By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

Excerpts from Malachi 3:19-20; Psalm 98:5-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; and Luke 21:5-19

Friends,

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for November 13th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. We have been following Luke's gospel throughout this liturgical year, and now we are nearing the end of our journey through both. In Luke's gospel, like in the others, near the end, Jesus does some teaching about what things will be like after he is gone, and before he comes back again. He says there will be signs of his impending return, and in particular, before that, there will be persecutions. Later, after his return, there will be justice in heaven for the righteous. In his words, "Nation will rise against nation. There will be earthquakes, famines, and plagues, and sights and signs from the sky. Before all this they will seize and persecute you and hand you over. You will be hated because of my name. But by your perseverance you will secure your lives."

The other readings also have references to signs and persecutions, and ultimately, justice in God's kingdom. In the first reading from Malachi, "The day is coming when the proud and evildoers will be stubble set on fire, but for those who fear the Lord there will arise the sun of justice." Psalm 98 proclaims, "Let the sea resound, the rivers clap their hands, and the mountains shout with joy. The Lord comes to rule with justice." In the second reading, from the second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul writes, "We did not act in a disorderly way among you. We wanted to present ourselves as a model to you. We instructed that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat. Those who have been minding the business of others we urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly."

Joe