

These last weeks of the Liturgical year bring to light certain truths

We live in the end times

Awaiting the return of Christ

But we also live in the kingdom

Building God's kingdom here in this present world

While we wait for Christ to come and put the finishing touches on it

Our lives and our world are not either/ or

But both / and

We build while on this earth

And we will take with us what we invested in

So the end of our year is a good time to consider

Am I ready to meet Christ?

What have I done for Christ?

What am I doing for Christ?

What ought I to do for Christ?

Next Sunday we celebrate Christ the King

Today we look at our hearts in preparation to meet our King

Our first reading was from the Book of Malachi

Written after the Jews had been in captivity in Babylon

They had been slaves

And prayed for deliverance

Knowing God was still with them

Even through their captivity

And they were expecting the Day of the Lord

For them it was a day of vengeance

When the Lord would free his people

And make their enemies suffer

The Jews were freed from the Babylonians

They had returned home

Everything had been given over to them

The Temple was rebuilt

Their bellies were full

And they quickly fell from worshiping God

Malachi warns them

The Day of the Lord will come

Not just for their enemies

But for them as well because of their unfaithfulness

**Paul faced a similar circumstance in the community of the
Thessalonians**

So many of them were certain the Lord would return during their life

They began to abandon the normal practice of their faith

They even began to ignore such basics of human life as work

Paul warns them

And us

We have to take responsibility for our own lives

And for the lives of those in our care

Faithful Christians fulfill all their obligations

To God and to neighbor

Paul teaches this by his words

But more effectively by what he does

**Our first two readings make more sense when we know to
whom they are addressed**

The same is true of the Gospel

Luke is writing to a specific group

Around 70 years after the death of Christ

The Temple was destroyed

Luke recalls what Jesus said about this while he was still with them

He is writing to people that thought the end was here

He desired to bring them comfort and confidence

They were waiting for the Day of the Lord

But again, in the wrong way

They were living in fear

The Temple was beautiful

It was an awesome physical structure as well

It was the center of their lives

Political, as a nation

Religious, as the Chosen People of God

And it was a mirror of nature

Where God walked with His people

As He did in the garden with Adam and Eve

So to hear it would be destroyed

Not one stone left upon another

Was to hear their lives would be destroyed

So they want to know

What will be the sign these things will happen?

He promises wars, earthquakes and famines

Awesome sights in the sky

Christians will suffer and e persecuted

All of these things sound familiar to us living today

But they have existed in nature since the dawn of creation

And following God has never been an easy path

Following Christ is not an easy path

The Day of the Lord is upon us

What have I done?

What am I doing?

What ought I to do?

These questions

And our answers are needed

Because I can guarantee one thing

Within one generation

Each and every person in this room

Each and every person in this world will face the Day of the Lord

It may not be the end of times

But we will all come face to face with Jesus Christ

At the end of our days

And we are called to prepare

Like Malachi called to his people

Like St Paul called to the Thessalonians

Like Luke called to his people

Their message is for us as well

How soon we forget

Remember 9-11?

How full the churches were?

Where are they now?

As we close out this year

We have an opportunity

An opportunity to help our parish grow

Every family has someone in their family

A neighbor or a friend that does not practice their faith

It should be an embarrassment that so many of our family

Are at other congregations

Or don't practice at all

Have we invited them home?

Have we asked them why?

Told them they are missed

While it is true we cannot change Church teaching

**We cannot offer Communion to those not in communion with
the Church**

The Church has her doctrines and teachings on marriage

A covenant between one man and one woman

On cohabitation

On divorce and remarriage

We have our belief on the dignity of human life

Openness to life within a marriage

Against contraception

Whatever situation they might find themselves in

We can reach out to them

Invite them to come and worship with us

Begin that journey back to communion

And promise to walk with them

**It would be great to call the bishop and tell him we need another
priest**

Because our churches are too full

This is the work that needs to be done

It is the work of the faithful

Time is short

The Day of the Lord is upon us

It is not time to look at what was and lament

It is time to look ahead with joy and hope

To see the New Temple

Christ the King at the head

His people like shining jewels

Building his kingdom here today

While we wait its completion in his day