

November 13, 2022 – 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
God's Final Plan...Catastrophe or Victory?
Gospel of Luke 21:5-19
Fr. John

When we come near the end of the Church's liturgical year, the Sunday readings are rather foreboding. They focus on what [in biblical terms] is referred to as apocalyptic events. That is...pertaining to the end of the world as we know it. Usually the images used are quite frightening and are often used by over zealous preachers to scare people or at least get their attention. These readings might also give the impression that God is a God of vengeance - out to get even with all those who have perpetrated violence and injustice upon others. I once saw a t-shirt that said: 'Jesus is coming back...and is he ever **ticked off!!!**'

Well, perhaps he would have every right to be very disappointed in our performance as a human race in terms of injustice, wars, and the many ways we have conducted ourselves since the dawn of our existence. We have even constructed ways to eliminate ourselves with nuclear weapons and destroy the very environment that gives us life.

No...we do not need a vengeful God but rather a God Who can save us...from ourselves!!

In the gospel today, Jesus assures those who were fearful that their world would end in a cataclysmic manner. He says that although we hear or even experience events that seem to spell the end of life as we know it, it is not the end but the beginning of a transformation.

That's not to deny that that transformation will not be painful or easy. We might ask anyone who has successfully managed to discover a new way of living after battling with alcoholism, drug addiction, or some other serious life-threatening trauma.

If there is violence mentioned in the bible, it is a metaphorical way in which God desires us to take affirmative action to combat those areas that are de-humanizing us. That is why the Gospel is 'Good News' because it gives us the hope and the assurance that God doesn't give up on us despite whatever tragedies and disasters may befall us.

God did not go to all the trouble to create us and indeed the whole universe in order that His work would be an ultimate failure.

For the early Christians, death and defeat seemed to be their fate in a pagan Roman Empire. Yet their faith, passed on from one generation to the next, not only preserved them but made them flourish.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Christian community in Rome, stated that all creation is groaning in the act of giving birth [Romans 8:22-23]. If that analogy is accurate, we may feel that we are still in the darkness of the birth canal. Yet there is light in the darkness of that tunnel. And that tunnel in human terms might be a lot longer than we had anticipated. But maybe that's because like an artist or an expert craftsperson the Creator takes the time and effort to create something of perfection. And in that we can place our trust.

'By your endurance you will gain your souls.'