

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
(Malachi 3:19-20 / Luke 21:5-19)
16.11.2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

As we approach the end of the liturgical year, the biblical readings chosen for our Sunday Eucharist invite us to reflect upon the end of time. At the end of time, Christ will return in glory for the Final Judgment before taking us to be with Him in the kingdom of his Father.

The description of the end of time proposed to us by Jesus is quite sombre: the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; wars and revolutions; earthquakes, plagues and famines; fearful sights and great signs from heaven; persecutions, imprisonments; betrayals, hate crimes and deaths...

We must remember that in the Christian vision the end of time is not something which will happen only later. The end of time has already begun with the Resurrection of Christ. We are in the end of times. If we look at what is happening within us, and all around us in the world today, we see things that are also quite sombre:

war in Ukraine where its inhabitants fight to repel the Russian invasion;

war in the Gaza strip where the Palestinian People suffers caught between Hamas and Israel;

and in so many other nations there are unknown wars about which the news desks do not speak.

There are people who think that money, gain and profit are more important than human values.

We cannot but see nearly everywhere an ever increasing gap growing between the very rich and those who cannot make ends meet.

How many brothers and sisters are unemployed and so unable to look after the basic needs of their loved ones!

We cannot ignore that more and more migrants are knocking at our doors.

Natural disasters: storms, earthquakes and flooding are part of daily news bulletins.

We could also evoke the innumerable epidemics and sicknesses that assail us,

to say nothing of our personal struggles which very often we hide from others and even from ourselves.

We are living in dark times at this period of history. ...

In this dark picture, we could legitimately ask: where is the Good News of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus? There is an answer to this question at the end of today's gospel passage: **"Not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives"**. Here is the Good News.

"Not a hair of your head will be lost". In the same gospel according to St Luke, we read "Every hair on your head has been counted. There is no need to be afraid". The Good News is that, in the midst of our personal trials and of the trials of the world, we are loved by the Father and his Son Jesus with an unlimited love. Whatever may be happening around us, we are not alone, we are not forgotten, we are loved. The Risen Lord promised us "to be with us always, yes, to the end of time" (Mt 28:20). We believe that the Lord is faithful to his promises. The loving God is with us. We should not forget his presence by our side in the midst of all our trials. The Lord desires to help us to deal with all the trials of life by looking at them in the same way that He looks at them, that is to say with hope. The Lord desires to help us to keep our head, mind and

heart from being engulfed by the waters of fear, depression, discouragement and sterile lamentation.

This is easy said, but more difficult to put into practice. It is for this reason that Jesus adds: **“Your endurance will win you your lives”**. ‘Endurance’ is one of the possible translations of the original Greek word ‘upomene’ meaning endurance, perseverance, constancy. Your endurance, your perseverance, your constancy will win you your lives.

The word ‘per-severance’ invites us etymologically to be “very strict” (to per-severe). But in what sense have we to be strict, in what sense have we to persevere? Jesus does not invite us to be strict with ourselves, by trying to be more and more perfect. We simply cannot be perfect in the sense of flawless. Jesus alone is perfect and he came to save us from our deadly dreams of perfection. Jesus does not invite us to be strict with others, to be rigid and inflexible with them. Jesus asks us to be strict, uncompromising, persistent in what counts, in what does not pass away; in one word Jesus asks us to be strict, perseverant with love. The magnificence of the Temple of Jerusalem will pass away. The work of our hands, our achievements, our occasional exploits, our religious and civil traditions will all pass away. Love will not pass away. If we want to be able to love, we have to per-severe in, to be strict with our life of personal prayer and of prayerful reading of the Scriptures where we shall find the strength and the way to love in truth all our brothers and sisters in humanity. Perseverance will help us to do good everyday, especially when the reality around us urges us to do otherwise. As we walk through the events of the end of time, to do good is to love our neighbour, to come to their help without counting the cost. What will last, that upon which we shall be judged, will be our works of mercy. Our endurance, our perseverance in doing good will win us our lives.

In Latin, the translation of the Greek word ‘upomene’ is patientia which gives us the word patience. Patience is of the same root as the word passion which evokes both love – we speak of ‘a passionate love’ – and suffering which we find in – ‘the passion of Christ.’ The truth is that, paradoxically, there is no true love without suffering. Our endurance in doing good, in loving cannot happen without suffering, without a share in the Cross of Jesus. Your patience will win you your lives.

During this Holy Year of Hope, endurance is an invitation to hope in God, an invitation not to be overwhelmed by the tragic events we witness all around us, not to allow ourselves to be enslaved by fear, anxiety, and depression. On the contrary, we are called to make our way through all these tragic events with the certainty that the Lord’s promise to be with us always is certain and trustworthy; that the Lord’s action of goodness toward us is always accompanied by his providential and reassuring tenderness: Do not be afraid, “not a hair of your head will be lost”. This is the sign that the kingdom of God is approaching us. Instead of becoming fearful, depressed and grumbling, the Lord calls us to become with him peacemakers and witnesses of hope. Hope makes us walk with Jesus on the very often tortuous roads of this world in the certainty that the power of his Spirit will bend the forces of evil, subjecting them to the power of God, that is to say to the power of love. Love is more powerful than evil, because love is God. By our endurance, we are invited to respond to hatred with love, to offence with forgiveness, to violence with dialogue, to ‘anger against’ with ‘prayer for’.

Our endurance will win us our lives! Such is the way leading to the kingdom of heaven.
Let us walk upon this way with hope. Amen