

33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
**Consultation Council and Memorial Celebration Guests**  
November 14, 2010  
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***Great transformations require radical upheavals  
that can be unnerving and very difficult.***

**Welcome:**

Introduction: Have you ever tried to make a prediction: Here are some—all from trusted individuals.

- Thomas Watson: Chair of IBM: 1943: “I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”
- Popular Mechanics magazine in 1949: Where a calculator on the ENIAC is equipped with 18,000 vacuum tubes and weights 30 tons, computers in the future may have only 1,000 vacuum tubes and weigh only 1.5 tons.
- Inventor, Lee DeForest: While theoretically and technically television may be feasible, commercially and financially it is an impossibility.
- Decca Recording Co.: Prediction; we don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out. That was their prediction in 1962 regarding a few lads from Liverpool, band called the Beatles.

As the disciples walked out of the Temple in Jerusalem Jesus paused, looked back at the temple and predicted: Do you see all these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another.

To the disciples the temple was bedrock: Nothing could bring down these walls.

Jesus’ prediction that a structure so immense and important would be leveled to the ground seemed implausible.

They pressed Jesus for more information—of course they wanted to know when, what would be a sign that this was coming about?

In their voice was fear. Fear of the unknown, fear that their lives were about to change forever.

The readings today leave most Catholics ill at ease and puzzled; they often relegate their message to fundamentalists, TV evangelists shouting about the coming end of the world. But concerns about the end of time have long been an issue.

Malachi: thought the day of the Lord was coming and it didn’t come.

Jesus: says that this generation will not pass away until all the predictions about the return of the Son of Man will be fulfilled.

Paul expected to be alive at the return of Jesus.

Yet all these expectations were not fulfilled, and even the most ardent millennialists today are constantly revising their timetable.

Though surfacing at times throughout history, a sense that the world is about to end, followed by the return of Jesus has never been part of mainstream of Catholic thought. Catholics believe we live between the times and not in only in anticipation of the end of time.

Our sense: discipleship will be played out over the long course of history.

So if our scripture is not only about the end times but today, then how do our readings for today encourage our discipleship?

### **Malachi:**

Remarkable brevity, filled with powerful message. There will be a time when Justice is revealed, the good rewarded and evil punished.

Malachi wrote in turbulent times-it is the era of reconstruction after exile. The lives of the people were in shambles.

Malachi gives hope by saying: On the day of the Lord, everything would be reversed. The Sun of Justice would come.

An appropriate tribute to God: whose face shines with light and life for all people.

### **Thessalonians:**

Paul writes to a community troubled from without and concerned for what arose from within as well.

- Some Thessalonians misinterpreted end times: they took an early retirement, refused to pull their own weight, by their idleness they became an already troubled community and became armchair critics who preferred to focus on the shortcomings of others rather than the coming of the Lord.
- Paul's concern: the gospel had become a means of lucre rather than a humble hope-filled, generous way of life. He is concerned because what is at stake is the reputation of the gospel.

### **Luke:**

Some look to this gospel as a timetable by which to predict the end of time. They use it as bludgeon to frighten the faithful into submission or instill in them a fear that could bring conversion or repentance. But predicting the end time is not Jesus' point. He says it is the false prophets that are doing so.

- This is a time of persecution: many died during the persecutions under Nero in the 60's and more Domitian in the 80's.
- In the midst of these struggles: imposters who presented themselves as the messiah whose return in glory they awaited, began to wonder if Jesus would ever return. Jesus warns against those who claim they have come in Jesus name to interpret the meaning of the events that are transpiring. Their sign are demonstrations of upheaval. Political unrest, violence, disturbances in natural world.
- Jesus warns hearers. End is not here. Something more will transpire: the point is not that they will suffer; the point is that they will suffer because of the name of Jesus. Testimony that fidelity to one's commitment is a greater good than life itself.

\*\*Have to endure upheaval so that they can be transformed in the age to come.

Remember: descriptions are metaphoric or symbolic in nature. We miss something if we merely understand them literally.

**To allay their fears and bolster their hope and strength their resistance:**

**Luke:**

Reminded readers of the ever present promise of Jesus.

Urged them to look at Jesus in whom the presence of God took on flesh.

Don't be terrified.

Don't follow false leaders.

Look upon the persecutions you suffer as an opportunity to give testimony.

In midst of pain you will be protected. Suffering is for refinement, purification, not punishment.

Encouraged them to patient endurance: to work diligently for the gospel, not knowing when the end will come.

You will be called upon to act in a way that witnesses to your fidelity to Christ and to what you really are.

If and when that opportunity becomes ours, Jesus has promised to give us wisdom in speaking-that our adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

**What does it mean for us:**

Leave the judging of ourselves and others to God. (From Malachi)

Set aside our fears and speculations; we are not to listen to naysayers or prophets of doom—rather to persevered in trusting God. (From Luke)

Busy ourselves with the ministry that Jesus has entrusted to us, instead of minding the business of others. (From Paul)

Can help transformation come about by living transformed lives now.

And remember: great transformations require radical upheavals that can be unnerving and very difficult but God is with us in whatever we face.