

Commentary on the Readings for Sunday, November 13, 2016

The 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

In several passages of the New Testament, the "*Day of the Lord*" is used to denote the *Second Coming* of Christ or, in the Old Testament, a day of judgment that would spell gloom and doom for those who have not been faithful to the God of Israel. Either way, there is a sense of *judgment* in the readings and the theme for this 33rd Sunday, the next to the last Sunday in this Liturgical Year. It is a timely message!

The **First Reading** is from the *Prophet Malachi (3:19-20A)*. The time is the early part of the 5th century BC when Israel was in great turmoil after the end of the Babylonian Exile. There was much corruption and unfaithfulness to God. The message here is that all humanity must eventually take sides to choose "good" or "evil" because "a Day is coming" when there will be a reckoning and all must be judged. Today, we look upon this "day of reckoning" as the *Last Judgment* when the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the "Son of justice" will sit in judgment over the "living and the dead." This is when all mankind will be held accountable for their actions and omissions, their deeds and misdeeds.

In the **Responsorial Psalm (98:5-9)**, the Psalmist represents God's faithful followers who are singing praises to the One who sits in judgment. The faithful have no need to worry for God "*will rule the world with justice and equity.*"

The **Second Reading** is from St. Paul's *Second Letter to the Thessalonians (3:7-12)*. At the time this letter was written, it was commonly thought by some of the early Christians that the *Day of the Lord*, the Second coming, was eminent in their lifetime. As a result, many people just stopped doing every-day chores, duties and daily work. This became a major problem for those who saw a need to continue a "normal" pace. Even St. Paul tells the people to continue working as he did to earn their "daily bread."

In the **Gospel Reading** from *Luke (21:5-19)*, we hear Jesus prophesy about the great destruction of Jerusalem that was about to happen. All of this came about in 70 AD as a result of the persecution of the Christians, first by the Jews and then by the Romans. It was a *Day of Judgment* for the Jewish people who did not accept Christ; but it was not the end of the world. Jesus then goes on to talk about the greater Day of Judgment that we will all face some day, first when we die and then again at the end of the world.

Traditionally, November is a month where our attention is directed to remembering our deceased relatives and friends (All Saints and All Souls Day) and to our own mortality and judgment. This is not done in a spirit of fear; rather, it is done in a spirit of preparedness when we are reminded that we are mortals and we will go to join our relatives and friends someday. November is also the end of the Church's Liturgical Year and the two subjects should be "flags" to our spiritual lives that say: "*Are YOU prepared?*" Something to think about during your Prayer Time this week! **MFB**