**ORDINARY TIME 33 C Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| As the liturgical year ends, the Church turns our attention to the Last Things: the final confrontation between good and evil, the end of the world, the universal judgment, God's victory, and the joy of heaven. Next Sunday is the Solemnity of Christ the King. The CCC teaches on the phrase in the Apostles’ Creed, “From thence he will come again to judge the living and the dead” in 668-682 and 1038-1060. While the focus of the gospel to- day is on the part of the story which concerns the trials, persecution, and tribulation of the Church, the whole should be put into the proper sequence of events, because many will have questions about these things. The main teachings are that the world will end and be transformed, that there is a final judgment, and that Christ will be victorious. |

**FIRST READING: Malachi 3, 19- 20a**

Malachi is the last of the minor prophets. It is a short book of only 55 verses in 3 chapters. Vs 19 presents a memorable and traditional view of the day of God’s return as fiery. Only at the end of the short reading does the promise of healing and justice appear for those who have held on to a sense of awe in the divine presence. Vs 20b which is not part of the reading, portrays the just as leaping like calves from the stall to trample the wicked. The sun’s healing “rays” in English was originally in Hebrew and Greek; the sun’s healing “wings”, the image coming from Mesopotamian and Persian culture, and perhaps could be taken as an allusion to the Holy Spirit.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is a final judgment on this world and our behavior necessary?  What does it mean in the CCC to refuse or accept grace? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is a final judgment on this world and our behavior necessary?  What does it mean in the CCC to refuse or accept grace? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Commit yourself this week to using God’s name for blessing.  How does doing justice for our neighbor play into this teaching about the final judgment? |
| **WORSHIP** | What part of the Mass invokes God’s name for you?  What is your response to God’s healing in your life in the liturgy? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Ps 98, 5-6. 7-8. 9**

The psalmist leads us in rejoicing the Lord is returning to rule the earth. We are portrayed as singing with all the natural world. It is not a psalm of silence, but rather of full-throated joy in the act of worship. Most of us get the principle of silence in the liturgy, but there are also moments for “trumpets and horns” and “resounding” and “shouting.”

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share what it means for you to think of the presence of Christ during the liturgy, not just as a figure of com- passionate love, but also of divine judge.  Why do we have music during the liturgy? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Make a more conscious effort to sing during the Mass.  How does your life praise God? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | When do you “cry for joy”? |
| **WORSHIP** | When during the liturgy are we asked to be “full-throated” and “resounding”?  What part of the Church architecture turns your attention to thoughts of “last things?” |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: II Thessalonians 3, 7-12**

This reading comes at the end of the letter, one of St. Paul’s earliest. St. Paul has much to say to our culture and world about the dignity and value of human work; references could be drawn from Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum novarum* and subsequent documents up to John Paul II’s *Laborem exercens.* Refer also to Genesis 2, 19 regarding Adam’s “cultivating and caring” for the garden as our first human work. Our work is a sharing in the saving work of Jesus; our lives in conformity with the cross in which heaven and earth intersect. Of course, vs. 11 will be the more poignant verse about busybodies, and may easily pre-occupy the whole sharing.

**Vs 10: CCC 2427** This part of the CCC explains the full meaning of the 7th Commandment. Our human work honors the Creator, whose work we are. The great work is carrying our cross with Christ because it 1) disciplines us, 2) sanctifies us, and 3) animates our earthly realities.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Adam worked in the garden as its steward and caretaker before the Fall. What is the work you are called to by God?  Why does the Church speak of the dignity of human work? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do you do your work with stewardship, carefulness, and dignity?  What can we do to avoid being busybodies? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Appreciate someone else’s work this week.  How does your discipleship animate your work? |
| **WORSHIP** | In what sense is worship, Sunday Mass attendance, the most noble human work?  What do you make of St. Thomas Aquinas’ saying: “Joy is the most noble human work.”?  How does your Sunday Mass experience shape your life in Christ? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 21, 5-19 Jesus’ Teachings about the Last Things in the Temple**

The community of Luke would know well that the Temple was destroyed in AD 71 by the future Roman Emperor Titus. It was a cultural, religious, and political disaster for the Jewish people. The Second Temple had just been completed under Herod the Great at great expense. This was the temple familiar to Jesus. Almost all of Luke 21 is an apocalyptic discourse of Jesus about the last things. His message: all earthly things pass away, attachment to things deceives us, there will always be human and natural disasters, witnessing leads to persecution, and the disciples endures and perseveres.

**Vs 12: CCC 675** The Catechism points to the ultimate trial of the Church as the Anti-Christ, “by which man glorifies himself in place of God”. First, however, as Jesus says, “before all this happens,” there will be a great persecution of the Church.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Recreate the end of time narrative with the group as the Bible and Catechism set it out.  Why is perseverance a virtue to be practiced? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share a personal story of something you accomplished through perseverance.  What are the historical events in our time comparable to the destruction of the Temple? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | During this week, respond with faith during conversations with others about the “great unraveling.”  What is the opposite of being terrified? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why do we still adorn our churches with costly materials and “votive offerings”?  How does the beauty of a church’s architecture lead you to respond with worship? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Christ the King C: II Sm 5, 1-2; Ps 122; Colossians 1, 12-20; Luke 23, 35-43**