

# Sunday Message

33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 16 November 2025 • Psalter Week 1

## TO GIVE COURAGEOUS WITNESS

LUKE 21:5-19

**In today's Gospel, Jesus warns his followers of tough times ahead. The Church should brace itself for a time of persecution. Its members will know betrayal, even from family members and close friends. Above all, its witness to the truth will make it highly unpopular. And so it has proven.**

Countless Christians have given their lives for the Gospel over the centuries. If anything, the numbers are increasing. Remember Fr Jacques Hamel, the elderly French priest murdered in 2016 while he celebrated Mass in a Normandy church. Or the image of a long line of young men kneeling in an arid desert, each with an executioner standing behind him. They were martyred because they were Coptic Christians.

Martyrdom takes other forms, too. As Pope Francis stated in *Gaudete et Exsultate*: "Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people 'utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.' At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous."

In our modern society, to say you are a Christian is to invite scorn. National and social media are especially hostile to the Church and religion. It is a cold climate for people of faith.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the final Beatitude refers to two types of persecution – martyrdom and suffering for the sake of the kingdom. It's unlikely we will be put to death for our faith, but it is likely we will be asked to suffer the second type of martyrdom – the opposition that comes from being identified as Christian.

Being a committed Christian isn't easy. "Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance," wrote Pope Francis. "He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others. Unless we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for 'whoever would save his life will lose it.'"

"In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stands in our way," warned Pope Francis. Living the Gospel "will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspicion, and met with ridicule".

"Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification," Pope Francis continued. "We must never forget that when the New Testament tells us we will have to endure suffering for the Gospel's sake, it speaks precisely of persecution."

Jesus' final words in today's Gospel are consoling. God will take account of every witness given to the truth; none of it will be forgotten, for even the hairs of the believer's head are numbered. Endurance and patience will be the hallmark virtues of Christians under persecution. ■

### LEARN

The Christian witnesses to the faith at all times and in all places.

The Christian is happy to suffer for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

### PRAY

Pray for the Church and for Christians everywhere, that they will always witness to and speak the truth, no matter how dangerous it may be.

### REFLECT

The monks had a major decision to make. An Islamic insurgency was taking place in Algeria, and many lives were being lost. A community of French Trappists had lived in the monastery of Tibhirine for decades, in harmony with the local Muslim population. Now, their harmony was being disrupted, and the monks had to decide whether or not to get out of the country. They chose to remain. Despite the growing danger, they decided to stand in solidarity with the townspeople. They agreed on the moral importance of maintaining their presence with the locals, even when faced with violence and death. On the night of 26–27 March 1996, terrorists seized seven of the monks and took them away. Two months later, their bodies were discovered. They had given their lives out of love for God and God's people. Their story is told in the beautiful film *Of Gods and Men*.

Sixteen years earlier, American lay missionary Jean Donovan faced a similar dilemma. In 1980, El Salvador was in the middle of such a brutal civil war that the American Peace Corps withdrew their volunteers from the country. They were afraid government death squads would target them. Jean's anxious parents wanted her to leave too. But she chose to stay. She wrote to a friend: "The Peace Corps left today and my heart sank low. The danger is extreme and they were right to leave... Now I must assess my own position because I am not up for suicide. Several times I have decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could, except for the children, the poor, bruised victims of this insanity. Who would care for them?"

Though afraid for her life, Jean overcame her fear and decided to stay. On 2 December 1980, she and three Maryknoll sisters were taken from their car and murdered by members of the El Salvadoran military. Jean was twenty-seven years old when she became a martyr. Her story is told in the beautiful film *Choices of the Heart*. ■

### SAY

"Lord, I thank you for my faith. Help me to live it courageously."

### DO

Speak to someone about why your faith is important to you.



## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction.  
You will call upon me, and I will answer you,  
and I will lead back your captives from every place.*

## COLLECT

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,  
the constant gladness of being devoted to you,  
for it is full and lasting happiness  
to serve with constancy  
the author of all that is good.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

*Amen.*

## FIRST READING Malachi 4:1-2a

A reading from the Prophet Malachi.

Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 98(97):5-6. 7-8a. 8b-9b. 9cd. R. cf. 9

*R: The LORD comes to judge the peoples with fairness.*

1. Sing psalms to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of song.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn,  
raise a shout before the King, the LORD. *R.*
2. Let the sea and all within it thunder;  
the world, and those who dwell in it.  
Let the rivers clap their hands. *R.*
3. The hills ring out their joy  
at the presence of the LORD, for he comes.  
He comes to judge the earth. *R.*
4. He will judge the world with justice,  
and the peoples with fairness. *R.*

## SECOND READING 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

A reading from the Second Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians.

Brothers and sisters: You know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labour we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

## ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Luke 21:28

*R: Alleluia, alleluia.*

Straighten up and raise your heads,  
because your redemption is drawing near.

*R: Alleluia.*

## GOSPEL Luke 21:5-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

At that time: While some were speaking of the Temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, Jesus said, 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.' And they asked him, 'Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?' And he said, 'See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am he!" and, "The time is at hand!" Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.'

Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it, therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and sisters, and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant, O Lord, we pray,  
that what we offer in the sight of your majesty  
may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you  
and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness.  
Through Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*To be near God is my happiness,  
to place my hope in God the Lord.*

Or

*Amen, I say to you: Whatever you ask in prayer,  
believe that you will receive,  
and it shall be given to you, says the Lord.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery,  
humbly imploring, O Lord,  
that what your Son commanded us to do  
in memory of him  
may bring us growth in charity.  
Through Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*