



## Bible Study – 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time C

St. Maria Goretti and  
St. Peter Claver  
Parishes

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“You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.” Lk. 21:17-19

### Reading I: Malachi 3:19-20a

**CALM DURING CHAOS.** How do you live when the world is on fire, when chaos dominates the landscape? Many of us learned the calming effects of the words from Psalm 23 verse 4: “*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.*” The soothing words of this Psalm help us to focus our energy on faith and not fear. Fear can rob us of our faith and cause us to bow to chaos. But the fear that destroys chaos is reverence for the God who created all things. As Christians, we know that Jesus is the calm before, during and after the stormy chaos of life. He is our calm during chaos. The first reading this Sunday describes a day when evil will be destroyed and those who *fear* God will walk in the light of God’s justice.



Your friends,  
relatives,  
brothers and  
sisters will  
betray you.

Malachi the prophet, whose name means messenger, or Yahweh’s messenger, preached to exiles about the year 450 B.C. He spoke out against the sins of his people for failing to remain faithful to God after their deliverance from the Babylonian exile. He speaks of a day of retribution for the wicked who will burn like trash in an oven (v. 19). They will be left with nothing. This is a nod to Isaiah 13:9, as well as a marker for Deuteronomy 28:10-19, where God promises to bless Israel for obedience and curse them for disobedience. The meaning of the word “fear” in v. 20 is closer to reverence and obedience. Therefore, those who reverence God in the midst of earthly fears and chaos will be blessed. Submission to the will of God provides calm in the midst of chaos. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How do you handle the chaos in your life?

### The Fear of the Lord

The term “Fear of the Lord” is used in the Old Testament as a designation of true piety (Prov 1:7; Job 28:28; Ps 19:9). It is a fear combined with love and hope, and is therefore not a mindless dread, but rather filial reverence. (Comp. Deut 32:6; Hos 11:1; Isa 1:2; 63:16; 64:8.) God is called “the Fear of Isaac” (Gen 31:42, 53), i.e., the God whom Isaac feared.

A holy fear is enjoined also in the New Testament as a preventive of carelessness in religion, and as an incentive to penitence (Matt 10:28; 2 Cor 5:11; 7:1; Phil 2:12; Eph 5:21; Heb 12:28,29). (From Easton's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

### Reading II: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

**CALM DURING CHAOS.** St. Paul praises the good works and faith of the Thessalonians in his two letters to them. In fact, he considers them an example for other communities. Yet, some had become complacent during the persecution and chaos of their day. Some abused the charity of others and refused to do what they could to earn their “daily bread.” Their excuse was the coming of the Lord was imminent. St. Paul had not told them it was imminent, but false teachers had convinced some of the congregation to do nothing and wait until the Lord came.

Like Malachi in the first reading, St. Paul encourages the faithful and chastises those who would abuse the charity of others (v. 7). He reminds them to imitate his conduct (see also 1 Thes. 2:10). While preaching in Thessalonica, St. Paul maintained his trade as a tent maker. With a nod to Proverbs 13:27, he encouraged them to remain busy and productive during these chaotic times (vv. 8-9). Like the Jews of Malachi’s day, the Thessalonians became irreverent, “working at nothing” (v. 16). They began to contribute to the chaos in the world. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Do you believe that all should pay their fair share? What happens if you cannot pay your fair share?

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

**CALM DURING CHAOS.** The “British have a saying: “*Keep Calm and Carry On!*” The hymn, *I Know My Redeemer Lives* by Samuel Medley (1738-99), captures this same sentiment in a spiritual form. The words of the hymn seem to calm the troubled soul in chaotic times. The writer says: *I know that my Redeemer lives! What comfort this sweet sentence gives! He lives, He lives, who once was dead; He lives, my ever living head! He lives to silence all my fears; He lives to wipe away my tears; He lives to calm my troubled heart; He lives all blessings to impart.*

This is the state of mind of a Christian who knows that God is in control. The way to remain calm during chaos is to show reverence and praise to the almighty and powerful God.

In the Gospel, Jesus encouraged the disciples to be calm during the chaotic days that were coming. His teachings on the destruction of Jerusalem were both a warning and encouragement to persevere. He wanted them to be ready for the coming of His Kingdom (vv 2:31-36), so he predicted the destruction of Jerusalem (see also Matt. 24:1-4; Mark 13:1-5). While there are other implications to the end of the world (vv. 20-34), we should remember that Jesus is a Jew talking to Jews about the future of their nation. In the Gospel of Mark, this same discussion took place on Mt. Olivet as Jesus, Peter, James, John, Andrew and others (Mark 13:3) considered the ornate character of the temple.

St. Luke presents Jesus teaching within the temple. The temple was associated with the end times, as it was a symbol of divine protection. To the Jew, its destruction was a loss of God’s favor and the end of their world. This is why the disciples asked when and for sighs of its destruction (v. 5-7).

Jesus encouraged them to remain calm during the chaos with three declarations: (1) Do not be deceived, so as to follow false “messiahs” (v. 8); (2) Do not be frightened, either by unsettling world events, or by persecution directed at you personally (vv. 9-19); and (3) Do not flee to Jerusalem for safety when it is under siege (vv. 20-24). Fear could cause them to listen to false messages and cower before betrayal and persecution. But if the disciples rely on the Lord during these times and do not panic, He will strengthen them. By their persistent faith, God will not allow any harm to come to them that He does not permit (vv. 15-29). Jesus, the Son of God is our calm in the midst of chaos. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What do you fear the most? What calms that fear?

Pray About It!

**Monday**

Read Psalm 23. Ask God for peace in your life.

**Tuesday**

Pray the Serenity Prayer, the Prayer of St. Francis.

**Wednesday**

Read Proverbs 13:25. Pray for someone who is unemployed.

**Thursday**

Speak a word of comfort to someone.

**Friday**

Pray for a family that you know that is living in chaos.

**Catechism of the Catholic Church - Jesus and the Temple at Jerusalem**

**583** Like the prophets before him, Jesus expressed the deepest respect for the Temple in Jerusalem. It was in the Temple that Joseph and Mary presented him forty days after his birth. At the age of twelve he decided to remain in the Temple to remind his parents that he must be about his Father’s business. He went there each year during his hidden life at least for Passover. His public ministry itself was patterned by his pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great Jewish feasts.

**Question:** *If Jesus ministry is patterned by his pilgrimages to Jerusalem, what should your attitude be toward attending Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist?*

**Resources:** *The Gospel of Luke*, Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Edition, Scott Hahn, Curtis Mitch, Dennis Walters, Ignatius Press San Francisco, p. 61; *The Sunday Readings Cycle C* Kevin O’Sullivan, O. F. M. Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Quincy, Ill. pp. 400-406; 2 Thessalonians Ivan Havener, O. S. B., Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1174-1176, Thomas Nelson Publishers; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year C* 2013, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 251-253; Malachi, Mary Margaret Pazadan. O.P. Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., pp 625-621

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2013