

## Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle C

Mal 3:19-20

Psalm 98

II Thes 3:7-12

Lk 21: 5-19

Shawn T. Tracy, O.S.A.

I/ Disasters Happen! Be patient; endure.

Luke was not simply predicting the coming of great catastrophes upon the planet. Rather he was reflecting back on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies and using that knowledge to lay out some basic facts of life. The first principle is that physical beings and their creations are impermanent. The second is that Christ represents a foundational relationship with an eternal God.

II/ The World Trade Center collapsed just as the temple in Jerusalem did in the year 70.

In our day and age we see the first principle played out in so many ways: the collapse of the World Trade Center! The recent hurricanes around the coast of Florida turning peoples' lives inside out! A sudden automobile accident that leaves a family in a relentless state of loss and mourning! And, if you happen to live in Iraq, the invasion of Fullujah. No structure, no ambitious human design, no human institution retains the character of permanence. Yet we are called to patience; we must endure!

III/ The god "Mars" is still with us!

James Hillman (an influential psychologist who takes advantage of insights grounded in myth and religion) has pointed out continually that the ancient Roman gods retain their validity as principles and factors in human behavior. When you look around at the various "wars and insurrections" that scar the face of the earth - like predictable weather patterns around the globe - you get an idea at what Hillman hints. The god "Mars" still reigns. In the wording of Luke, "nations rise against nations; kingdoms against kingdoms!"

IV/ The name of Jesus!

Luke highlights the name of Jesus three times in today's Gospel, and this is his second principle in a nutshell. Luke beckons us to radical Christian commitment. He points to Jesus as the way to the Eternal in life. Simply put, the name of Jesus makes all the difference. Luke realistically draws upon the inevitability of persecutions and terrors inflicted upon faithful believers. You can hear an echo in the master's voice, "you will be mocked, scourged and crucified, and they will put you to death, but you will rise again!" The key words are, "All because of me!" Jesus confronts the idolatrous little gods of this passing world in favor of the

eternal salvation to be found in faith! Jesus not only promises eternal life; he is eternal life!

V/ So what'ya gonna do?

You live by faith, that's what you do. You do not store up treasures on earth where thieves break in and steal and moths chew up and destroy. You confront the god "Mars" in the name of Jesus whenever he rears his ugly head. You call on the name of Christ for strength and support in the struggle against depression, hopelessness and fear. You rely on God's eternal spirit for the strength and patience to endure. You live by the Gospel - which is eternal - and not by government, opinion or social addictions. Therefore, you have no fear of death! In fact you have great courage. You give testimony. You speak with "a wisdom that none can refute" - and it is neither foolish, escapist nor naive. You live with patience; you endure!

In the words of the prophet Malachi, "You who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice, and with it, rays that heal."