

The Destruction of the Temple (33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

Malachi 4:1-2—The Coming of the “Day of the LORD”

1. The “Day of the LORD” = the day of judgment
2. Images of Judgement: Fire of Judgment and “Sun of justice”

Psalm 98: “The Lord comes to rule the earth with Justice”

1. Sing praise to the LORD with lyre, trumpet, and horn (98:5-6)
2. Let the sea, floods, and hills sing for joy (98:7-8)
3. For the LORD “comes to judge the earth” with righteousness (98:9)

Luke 21:5-19—Jesus Prophesies the Destruction of the Temple

1. Context: the disciples’ amazement at the beauty of the Jerusalem Temple
2. Jesus’ Prophecy: Not “one stone left upon another”
 - a. Question: “When will this be?”
 - b. Many will say “the time is at hand”; do not be led astray
3. The Message to the Disciples:
 - a. Wars, Earthquakes, famines, plagues
 - b. Persecution of the disciples: a time for “testimony” (Greek *matyrion*)
 - c. Betrayal, execution: “You will be hated by all for my name’s sake”
 - d. “By your endurance you will gain your lives (Greek *psychas*)”

Jewish Context

1. The Jewish Temple:
 - a. Dwelling-Place of God (1 Kings 8:10-14)
 - b. Sole Place of Sacrifice (Deut 12:5-14)
 - c. Microcosm of Heaven and Earth (Ps 78:6)
2. Josephus: Parts of the Temple “*were in every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe.*” (*Antiquities* 3.7.81)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building.. *By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days*, which were to begin with his own Passover. (CCC 585)

Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through *a final trial* that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the “mystery of iniquity” in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth... *The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover*, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a

The Mass Readings Explained

historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God’s victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven *God’s triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.* (CCC 675, 677)

Questions for Discussion, Reflection, and Application (33rd Sunday, Year C)

1. The readings for this Sunday are the last Sunday of Ordinary Time before the final feast of Christ the King, which will end the liturgical year C. Why do you think the Church chooses to end Ordinary Time with Jesus’ rather dire prophecies of the destruction of the Temple and the persecution of the disciples?

2. How do you imagine the final judgment? Jot down some of your impressions, and then compare them with the response of creation in Psalm 98.

3. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ever “since the Ascension” of Jesus, “we are already at the ‘the last hour’” (CCC 670). What are the implications of the teaching in CCC 670?
