

**These last weeks of the Liturgical year bring to light certain truths**

**We live in the end times**

**Awaiting the return of Christ**

**But we also live in the kingdom**

**Building God's kingdom here in this present world**

**While we wait for Christ to come and put the finishing touches on it**

**Our lives and our world are not either/ or**

**But both / and**

**We build while on this earth**

**And we will take with us what we invested in**

**So the end of our year is a good time to consider**

**Am I ready to meet Christ?**

**What have I done for Christ?**

**What am I doing for Christ?**

**What ought I to do for Christ?**

**Next Sunday we celebrate Christ the King**

**Today we look at our hearts in preparation to meet our King**

**Our first reading was from the Book of Malachi**

**Written after the Jews had been in captivity in Babylon**

**They had been slaves**

**And prayed for deliverance**

**Knowing God was still with them**

**Even through their captivity**

**And they were expecting the Day of the Lord**

**For them it was a day of vengeance**

**When the Lord would free his people**

**And make their enemies suffer**

**The Jews were freed from the Babylonians**

**They had returned home**

**Everything had been given over to them**

**The Temple was rebuilt**

**Their bellies were full**

**And they quickly fell from worshiping God**

**Malachi warns them**

**The Day of the Lord will come**

**Not just for their enemies**

**But for them as well because of their unfaithfulness**

**Paul faced a similar circumstance in the community of the  
Thessalonians**

**So many of them were certain the Lord would return during their life**

**They began to abandon the normal practice of their faith**

**They even began to ignore such basics of human life as work**

**Paul warns them**

**And us**

**We have to take responsibility for our own lives**

**And for the lives of those in our care**

**Faithful Christians fulfill all their obligations**

**To God and to neighbor**

**Paul teaches this by his words**

**But more effectively by what he does**

**Our first two readings make more sense when we know to whom they are addressed**

**The same is true of the Gospel**

**Luke is writing to a specific group**

**Around 70 years after the death of Christ**

**The Temple was destroyed**

**Luke recalls what Jesus said about this while he was still with them**

**He is writing to people that thought the end was here**

**He desired to bring them comfort and confidence**

**They were waiting for the Day of the Lord**

**But again, in the wrong way**

**They were living in fear**

**The Temple was beautiful**

**It was an awesome physical structure as well**

**It was the center of their lives**

**Political, as a nation**

**Religious, as the Chosen People of God**

**And it was a mirror of nature**

**Where God walked with His people**

**As He did in the garden with Adam and Eve**

**So to hear it would be destroyed**

**Not one stone left upon another**

**Was to hear their lives would be destroyed**

**So they want to know**

**What will be the sign these things will happen?**

**He promises wars, earthquakes and famines**

**Awesome sights in the sky**

**Christians will suffer and be persecuted**

**All of these things sound familiar to us living today**

**But they have existed in nature since the dawn of creation**

**And following God has never been an easy path**

**Following Christ is not an easy path**

**The Day of the Lord is upon us**

**What have I done?**

**What am I doing?**

**What ought I to do?**

**These questions**

**And our answers are needed**

**Because I can guarantee one thing**

**Within one generation**

**Each and every person in this room**

**Each and every person in this world will face the Day of the Lord**

**It may not be the end of times**

**But we will all come face to face with Jesus Christ**

**At the end of our days**

**And we are called to prepare**

**Like Malachi called to his people**

**Like St Paul called to the Thessalonians**

**Like Luke called to his people**

**Their message is for us as well**

**How soon we forget**

**Remember 9-11?**

**How full the churches were?**

**Where are they now?**

**As we close out this year**

**We have an opportunity**

**An opportunity to help our parish grow**

**Every family has someone in their family**

**A neighbor or a friend that does not practice their faith**

**It should be an embarrassment that so many of our family**

**Are at other congregations**

**Or don't practice at all**

**Have we invited them home?**

**Have we asked them why?**

**Told them they are missed**

**While it is true we cannot change Church teaching**

**We cannot offer Communion to those not in communion with  
the Church**

**The Church has her doctrines and teachings on marriage**

**A covenant between one man and one woman**

**On cohabitation**

**On divorce and remarriage**

**We have our belief on the dignity of human life**

**Openness to life within a marriage**

**Against contraception**

**Whatever situation they might find themselves in**

**We can reach out to them**

**Invite them to come and worship with us**

**Begin that journey back to communion**

**And promise to walk with them**

**It would be great to call the bishop and tell him we need another  
priest**

**Because our churches are too full**

**This is the work that needs to be done**

**It is the work of the faithful**

**Time is short**

**The Day of the Lord is upon us**

**It is not time to look at what was and lament**

**It is time to look ahead with joy and hope**

**To see the New Temple**

**Christ the King at the head**

**His people like shining jewels**

**Building his kingdom here today**

**While we wait its completion in his day**