



Come and See!

Week of November 16, 2025, 33 OT

The Word...

“Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire”
(*Mal 3:19-20*).

“When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky”
(*Lk 21:5-19*).

Pondering the Word ...

I rarely write these reflections in order, i.e., starting with Sunday and moving through each day until Saturday. Usually, something will speak to me from one of the weekly readings, and the Spirit will lead from there. Such is the case this week.

Today’s readings are about end times, typical for this time of year (yes, Advent starts in two weeks!). They are scary, about fires and wars and plagues...oh my! ...things that will impact and end our mortal lives in death. In the gospel, the people are anxious. They want to know what signs will appear so they can be ready. I’m sure we’d like advance warning too, especially since fires, wars, and plagues have happened with regularity over the centuries. “Isn’t there something new you can tell us, Jesus, any new sign so that we can prepare?”

“Yes,” Jesus says. “I can, but it’s not something new. I tell you about it all the time. In fact, I say it in this Saturday’s reading: ‘For to God, all are alive!’”

Living the Word...

We want to have details so that we can be in control. Jesus wants us to have faith, so that God is in control.

The apocalyptic readings that occur before Advent and the celebration of the Nativity are purposeful. They are reminders that, yes, our mortal lives will end. Whether it is amid fires and earthquakes or peacefully surrounded by loved ones, we will surrender our bodies back to the earth and “*our breath to God who gave it*” (Eccl 12:7). But the Incarnation—the story of God taking flesh and living and dying and rising again—is the assurance that, to God, every one of us is and always will be alive, thanks to God’s gracious mercy! God wants us to live in peace and joy while we are on this earth and when our life breath returns to its Source.

Use these weeks leading up to Advent to reflect: Are you alive in God, not just bodily, but in the Spirit? Does the presence of the Spirit animate you and keep you focused on finding signs of God in all things and all people? (This can be challenging!) The best way to prepare for whatever happens is to live each day alive in the Spirit, awash in Divine Love.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Nov 17: *Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Lk 18:35-43).* **Provision: Don't assume you know what the other wants or needs.** Jesus doesn't assume to know what those who come to him want. You may say, "God knows everything—Jesus even tells us that (Mt 6:8)! Why does Jesus ask?" Jesus empowers the one who asks with their faith, confirming their role in their own healing. He does this, also, to set an example for all of us (who are not God!). When we serve others, we may think they want what we would want in their situation. That is not always the case. Treat those you serve with dignity. Listen to them and their stories and their wants and needs. Do what you can to empower them with choice.

Tue, Nov 18: *"At our age it would be unbecoming to make such a pretense; many young people would think the ninety-year-old Eleazar had gone over to an alien religion" (2Mc 6:18-31).* There's a retirement community near me and on select Saturdays, some residents take a bus to a nearby beltway overpass to protest the treatment of immigrants and the poor. It's amazing to see. They get supportive honks and cheers from most of the cars passing below, with an occasional rude gesture from a few. **Provision: "To tolerate is to teach."** At a recent protest march, a priest framed it this way: *"This is not a political issue. This is a moral issue."* I heard an older gentleman say, *"I want my grandkids to know I was here, fighting for their future."* I can fall prey to jadedness and hopelessness about the cruelty happening in my country, but I will not go over to an alien religion that uses Christ to justify hate. What do you tolerate? What lessons are you teaching your kids or grandchildren?

Wed, Nov 19: *Seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law (2Mc 7:1, 20-31).* The Books of Maccabees are not on my list of favorite Scriptures. They are not in the Hebrew Bible as they were written after the canon was established. But the example of not eating pork struck me as symbolic. **Provision: What is "the pork" I would refuse today?** This is a hard one, locked away as I am in my safe, suburban enclave. It reminds me of the saying, "If you were brought before a judge on the charge of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Use this question for deep reflection and prayer. What am I willing or not willing to do to follow God's law of love?

Thu, Nov 20: *"As Jesus drew near Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If this day you only knew what makes for peace ...you did not recognize the time of your visitation" (Lk 19:41-44).* Luke wrote some 20 years after the fall of Jerusalem, so he is presenting Jesus in his role as prophet. From the first centuries, BCE through the fall of the temple, there was a lot of in-fighting in the Jewish community between different sects. This made it even easier for Rome to overpower the city. **Provision: How is Jesus "visiting" us today?** I wonder: even if the Jewish people were of one accord, recognizing God in their midst, would that have stopped the Romans from destroying their temple? Probably not. But perhaps the people, being as one, would have found peace for themselves. There is a lot of in-fighting in the name of Christ today, making it easier for those who oppose his message of love to overpower it. What lessons can we take from our forebears in faith?

Fri, Nov 21: *"It is written, 'my house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it 'a den of thieves'" (Lk 19:45-48).* Jesus combines two OT passages: Is 56:7 and Jer 7:11. It is important to read what precedes v. 11 in Jeremiah (v. 5-7): *"Only if you reform your ways and your deeds; if each of you deals justly with your neighbor; if you no longer oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow...only then will I let you continue to dwell in this place."* **Provision: What happens outside the temple matters.** A warning for us who ignore the plight of immigrants, the poor, and the disenfranchised. *"Woe to those who enact unjust statutes, who write oppressive decrees, depriving the needy of judgment, robbing my people's poor of justice, making widows their plunder and orphans their prey! What will you do on the day of punishment when the storm comes from afar?" (Is 10:1-3).*

Sat, Nov 22: *"For to [God] all are alive" (Lk 20:27-40).* Just a small snippet of Jesus' words, but oh! how powerful they are, particularly for those who have lost loved ones. **Provision: All are alive in God.** Reflect on these words. Turn them over in your head and heart. What do they say to you? If, to God, all are alive, then let all be alive for you as well. Hold deceased loved ones close and cherish their lives. For all those who suffer from grief or depression, know God's mercy is for all God's creatures and creation! Our God is incarnate and alive, so let us be as well!! Alleluia!