



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Fr. David Rosenberg  
Institute for Spiritual Direction  
visit us at <http://www.ISDministries.org>

*"By your fortitude you will gain your soul." Luke 21:19*

This passage comes from Jesus' apocalyptic discourse in Luke. It is based on a similar section in Mark. But there are nuances in Luke's version that make it clear that the end of the world is not in the near future. The time and date are reserved for only God to know. As early as the Apostolic Era we've had "dooms day prophets" predicting that the end was near. These prophets drove fear into the hearts of the populous, but did little to draw Christians of Good Will to the heart of the divine mercy of Christ.

This Gospel reading is divided into three sections: The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem; the discussion of apocalyptic signs; and the persecution to be experienced by believers. Jesus urges us to trust in God through all such trials, knowing that ultimately good triumphs over evil.

Certainly the prediction of the destruction of the temple did indeed come true, in or about the year 70 A.D. But the destruction of the temple was not the end of the world, just the end of the world as Jews in Jerusalem knew it.

The persecutions that Christians have endured were also proven to be true, even down to our modern era. But predictions of persecutions should give us cause to seek the fortitude of the Holy Spirit to remain living in the joyful heart of Christ, where we, like the great martyred saints before us, join our suffering to Christ's Cup of Suffering, present at every Eucharistic Celebration prior to the consecration and the transubstantiation to the Cup of Salvation.

This reading has direct application for Christians today, especially in light of the numerous claims about the end of the world. Jesus' words about not being misled are good advice for all who might otherwise be seduced by such claims. The words about persecution and perseverance are also valuable for contemporary Christians. While most of us will probably not face imprisonment or death for our beliefs, we increasingly experience opposition from family, friends or neighbors. Whatever form our suffering takes, we are called to trust in the presence of Christ to guide us in what to say and to sustain us through our trials. Through "patient endurance" we will be saved.

The apocalyptic signs, dire as they are, should remind us that Christ calls us to the Eucharistic Altar, the nexus of the greatest event in the history of humankind, where we can personally witness what should have been the worst day in the earthly life of Jesus Christ, only to learn that Christ was the victor, and it was instead the worst day in Satan's life.

"End Times," known as the study of Eschatology, the science of "last things," can be viewed through two lenses: "Cosmic End Times," and our own "Personal End Time." Regardless of which takes place first, we should look forward to our "Personal End Time" with joyful expectation, every day.

This week, as we reflect on the *Four Last Things*, "Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell," let us gain confidence that Death will have no sting; That Judgment has been pronounced in our favor by God the Father for the sacrifice of Christ dying on the Cross; That Heaven is our sure destination; and that Hell has been reserved for Satan and the souls he made eternally delusional. Our "End Time" one way or the other will take our worst day, and like Christ, turn our suffering to joy, as we celebrate the victory of life over death. Our mantra:

*"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Luke 23:42*

**A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.**

When some were speaking about the temple,  
how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God,  
Jesus said,

*"As for these things that you see,  
the days will come when not one stone  
will be left upon another;  
and all will be thrown down."*

They asked him, *"Teacher, when will this be,  
and what will be the sign that this is about to take place!"*

And Jesus said,

*"Beware that you are not led astray;  
for many will come in my name and say,  
'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!'  
Do not go after them."*

*"When you hear of wars and insurrections,  
do not be terrified;  
for these things must take place first,  
but the end will not follow immediately."*

Then Jesus said to them,

*"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;  
there will be great earthquakes,  
and in various places famines and plagues;  
and there will be dreadful portents  
and great signs from heaven."*

*"But before all this occurs,  
they will arrest you and persecute you;  
they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons,  
and you will be brought before kings and governors  
because of my name."*

*"This will give you an opportunity to testify.  
So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance;  
for I will give you words and a wisdom  
that none of your opponents  
will be able to withstand or contradict."*

*"You will be betrayed even by parents,  
by brothers and sisters, and by relatives and friends;  
and they will put some of you to death.  
You will be hated by all because of my name.  
But not a hair of your head will perish.  
By your fortitude you will gain your soul."*