

## Closing Prayer

Lord God of all the ages,  
the One who is, who was, and who is to come,  
stir up within us a longing for your kingdom,  
steady our hearts in time of trial,  
and grant us patient endurance  
until the sun of justice dawns.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

*Opening prayers · Ordinary Time 33, Year C<sup>3</sup>*

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year C

## Second Sunday before Advent

*Sunday between 13 and 19 November inclusive ·  
Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*

### Principal Service readings

Malachi 4.1-2a	The coming of the Day of the Lord
Psalms 98	Sing to the Lord a new song
2 Thessalonians 3.6-13	Do not weary of doing right
Luke 21.5-19	wars and rumours of wars ... but the end is not yet

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *The destruction of the Temple predicted*

<sup>5</sup>When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, Jesus said, <sup>6</sup>“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>7</sup>They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” <sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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.’ <sup>10</sup>Then he 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.

<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>This will give you an opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup>So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; <sup>15</sup>for I

<sup>3</sup> *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all because of my name. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your souls.’

Luke 21.5-19 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

## Comments and Questions

In chapter 20 Luke showed divisions between Jesus and his opponents. In today’s passage Jesus begins by talking about the destruction of the temple (21.6).<sup>2</sup> He interrupts this with some thoughts about what could be expected before these events (21.11-19), before going on to speak more about the fall of the city (21.20-24).

His warnings and predictions are ominous, but we should resist speculation about the fulfilment of Jesus’ words in our contemporary world, as well as refusing to speculate about what Jesus might have said and what has come from the community in Luke’s day. We should note that Jesus is portrayed as a prophet. Being a prophet was being God’s spokesperson but also making predictions.

To those who first heard Luke's Gospel, Jesus’ words about the destruction of the temple may have been viewed positively. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans had already happened (A.D. 70) when Luke wrote his gospel (which most scholars think was between A.D. 80 and A.D. 90). It seems that Luke is trying to interpret the fall of Jerusalem for his audience and to locate it in God's plans for humankind (salvation history). Is Luke also suggesting that there will be a considerable elapse of time before Jesus’ final coming? Luke's listeners have likely seen much upheaval and are anxious to know if these are the signs of Jesus’ coming. Maybe Luke is urging greater patience.

Jesus then warns that his followers will face persecution for their beliefs (21.12). Luke presents such persecution as an opportunity for the followers of Jesus for ‘This will give you an opportunity to testify’ (Luke

<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

<sup>2</sup> Similar to Mark 13.2 and Matthew 24.3, although Luke has Jesus continuing to speak in the temple, rather than withdrawing to the Mount of Olives.

21.13). In persecution God’s wisdom and power will be shown in the example of followers of Jesus, so they do not need to be anxious about preparing for it, for God will help them at that time (21.14). Perseverance in the face of persecution will lead to their salvation (21.19).

## Quotations

### 1

Note, though, something else of great significance about the whole Christian theology of resurrection, ascension, second coming, and hope. This theology was born out of confrontation with the political authorities, out of the conviction that Jesus was already the true Lord of the world who would one day be manifested as such. The rapture theology avoids this confrontation because it suggests that Christians will miraculously be removed from this wicked world. Perhaps that is why such theology is often Gnostic in its tendency towards a private dualistic spirituality and towards a political laissez-faire quietism. And perhaps that is partly why such theology with its dreams of Armageddon, has quietly supported the political status quo in a way that Paul would never have done.”

*Surprised by hope: rethinking heaven, the resurrection, and the mission of the church*  
/ N. T. Wright. 2007

### 2

It is not enough that we do our best; sometimes we must do what is required.

Winston L. S. Churchill, 1874–1965

### 3

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

Martin Luther, 1483–1546

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Eschatology; last judgement; hell; heaven; soteriology; kingdom of God