

33rd Sunday OT – Luke 21:5-19

This is from *Catholic Women Preach*, “Thirty years ago this weekend, in the early morning hours in the city of San Salvador, six Jesuits, their cook, and her fifteen year-old daughter were murdered at the University of Central America by Salvadoran government forces.

“The Jesuits were professors, academics, intellectuals at the top of their game. And they were killed because they were outspoken advocates for those who were poor and suffering in a country that had already been racked by a decade of a violent civil war. Their intellectual abilities were coupled with the wisdom that they needed to use their power and privilege to work for a more just society. They lived out Pope Francis’s vision of the Church as *a field hospital for the wounded, a poor church for the poor*. For doing this—**for engaging in the gospel work of bringing good news to the poor**—they were deliberately killed. They are martyrs, witnesses to the faith.”

Our example of the teaching of Jesus in the Temple comes from his *apocalyptic discourse*, or the **End of Times**. In Luke this is spoken within the Temple and not outside it and it is concerned exclusively with the events related to the fall of the city in 70 AD by Roman troops and not those at the end of the world.

Jesus warned of false prophets, famines, wars and persecutions. Even between the time of Jesus and Luke writing his gospel, examples of all of these are known to us from the Acts of the Apostles. The wars and troubles of the year 69 AD in which four emperors struggled for office, would be familiar to Luke’s readers. Such upheavals take place in every age including our own, **even in El Salvadore**. Jesus prepared his disciples by his teaching on his way to Jerusalem. He had himself shown them the way of prayer and watchfulness. If they persevered, they, like the seed in the good soil, would bear much fruit by their patient endurance.

Jesus warns us about what it means to be a martyr. He tells us what will happen to those who follow him, and the words can feel contradictory: Those who follow him will be persecuted, even killed, but not a hair on their head will be harmed. It seems like both can’t be true. But we live in the tension of God’s kingdom—**here but not yet**. What seems like utter loss and destruction here may be redeemed through the love of Christ that overcomes death.

How we get to the Kingdom of Heaven should be our main concern, and that is the point of today's gospel, the End of Times. How do we live our lives now, in this very minute ready for the End of Times? The Jesuits and their cook and her daughter hopefully were ready. Jesus reminds us, "We do not know the day or the hour."

But the End of Times can mean several things. It can mean our immediate death, hopefully from old age. Or it can be our unannounced death as in a car accident, or illness. The End of Time could come with a cataclysmic comet crashing into earth as one did ending the age of the dinosaurs. Of course, being ready is more than going to Mass each Sunday and confession once or twice a year. Hopefully it is living the life that slowly transforms us from the old man into the new man, as Saint Paul uses the phrase. ***The Kingdom of God is within*** and hopefully we are already living or we would not be here today.

My second grade teacher was Sister Francis Cabrini, whose namesake we celebrated this past week as the first American Saint is a great example of the kingdom of God among us. For me she not only brought the Kingdom of God among us on the playground at Saint Agnes Grade School put a face with a smile on the face of God. She was my first inspiration for religious life. I went home and told my Mom that I wanted to be a nun just like Sister Francis Cabrini. She said to forget it. Only women can become nuns.

When I went to the third grade, we had a new "lay" teacher, the most beautiful woman I ever saw in my seven years of life. When I got home I told my Mom that I wanted to marry my Third Grade teacher. She said to forget it, since she was already engaged. I was heart broken until the Fourth Grade when we got another "lay" teacher, just as beautiful. But by then Mikey Nartker couldn't behave even for her, and she called me to the front of the classroom and made an example for the other students. She pulled out her ruler and wacked me on my knuckles. I figured that even if she didn't get married she would eventually become a nun. I told my Mom that I decided not to get married since women are too confusing. My mom was ecstatic. Figure that one out. I guess she figured that here was at least one son that would be a priest.

The kingdom of God is among you and it is in the women living among us!