

Chaplain's Bulletin November 13, 2022



Dear Folks,

As we get toward the end of the Liturgical year, we talk about endings. In “Avengers: Endgame” Iron Man famously said, “Part of the journey is the end.”

Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are the apocalyptic chapters. John, instead of a chapter, gives us the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse. “Apocalypse” comes from the Greek for “removal of the veil.” “Revelation” comes from “removal of the veil” in Latin. Apocalyptic writing tends to use bizarre imagery and lots of numbers. It is to unveil the meaning of what is happening. It is not meant to help us figure out when Jesus is coming again.

These chapters in Matthew, Mark, and Luke start with Jesus talking about the destruction of the temple, move to dealing with persecutions, and ending with the coming of the Son of Man. This finishes Jesus’ public teaching, except Matthew adds chapter 25 with three parables about the last judgment.

The prediction of the destruction of the temple was amazing to people. It had been destroyed once before in 586 B. C. by the Babylonians, so it was not without precedent, but that was a long time ago, and the temple was the most stable thing they knew of, and the center of their cultural and religious life. In the year 70 the Romans did destroy it and destroyed much of Jerusalem.

In Apocalyptic writing, there are some key points:

- Anything of the earth might be destroyed.
- We will see virtue punished and evil rewarded.
- It might look like God’s side is losing.
- We will be tempted to give up.
- God’s plan is actually unfolding, and He wins, but it might not look like it until the end, so..
- Most Important: Don’t give up!

In a culture that is increasingly hostile to the Christian faith, Christian belief, and Christian values and accusing us of being oppressive and hostile to human rights, we have to get better at sharing God’s teaching in a way that shows its goodness, beauty, and truth. Many Christians have shared Christian faith and values in a way that makes sense to them but does not make sense to others who have been steeped in the mindset of society. We live in a society in which killing babies, mutilating confused children, and defining marriage out of existence is seen as compassionate, and opposing it is seen as cruel. We have to start at the beginning, on the dignity of every human life, empathy for those different from us, and how being human means something much deeper than following our feelings and desires. We have to show God’s love by example and do better than we have been doing (whatever we have been doing, it clearly is not enough).

We have to bridge the gap between the Christian world view and the society's perspective. One of the great champions of this is St. Paul, and I recommend his talks in Acts 17, Acts 22, and Acts 26. Much to be done, and we are just getting started. "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up (Galatians 6:9)."

Blessings,

Fr. Jim