

The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C
- Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and
Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift
Tags Available) -
Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First
Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses -
12/13 November 2016 -
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community -
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Malachi 3:19-20a

- "Lo, the day is coming But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with it healing rays."

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 98 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

- "You know how one must imitate us. . . . On the contrary, we worked, so as not to burden any of you. . . we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat. We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food."

GOSPEL:

LUKE 21:5-19

- "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will

Page 2 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. . . . Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.” . . .

“ . . . his name (which is equivalent to his mission and his person) will be the cause of disruption. . . . if they work hard, do the right thing, then their lives (and the world situation) should “every day, in every way, get better and better.” . . . there are no guarantees or time frames in God’s promise to renew the face of the earth. It will happen, but the question of “when” remains unanswered.” . . . “

Page 3 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

i. Last week, we were reminded of how we are all stewards who live in this “in-between” gift of time our God has given to us and of how, while there will always be a great deal that competes for our attention . . . many distractions in this life . . . in this “in-between” time . . . that will compete for our hearts . . . our loyalty . . . our energy and faith . . . the gift of time God has blessed us with in this life will always be connected to the eternal time God calls us to prepare for in the life yet to be . . . a path to follow . . . not measured by hours or days or the various experiences that, on occasion, consume us . . . but to a happiness and a joy without end . . .

The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, in his book, “The Gift of Peace”, written shortly before he died from terminal Cancer, recalled how during bouts of illness, treatment, and other difficult situations that all seemed to be coming down on him at one time, he was mentally and physically exhausted. He would try to wake early in the morning to enter into his regular prayer routine and found that was becoming increasingly more difficult, along with his ability to maintain any prayerful focus. At one point, he even considered that, perhaps, he would

Page 4 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

change this life-line routine . . . even forgo it . . . but then realized that this would be foolish on his part . . . he needed to make himself available to God and even if he could not pray . . . even if he could not maintain focus . . . no matter the circumstance . . . he would not give that time to anyone other than God . . . for he was convinced that God would do the work God wanted to do . . . and all God asked of him was to make himself available . . . to offer a portion of God's gift of time back to God . . .

ii. Far too often, we human persons . . . "stewards" of what God has given to us, forget this important truth . . . far too often, we take everything God has blessed us with . . . time . . . talent . . . and yes, treasure . . . and spend it or use it on our need for our personal satisfaction and happiness now . . . and not even consider giving God back any portion in gratitude.

"But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays." . .

Certainly, we could stop short and get caught up in that whole notion of **fear** . . . but the fear spoken of

Page 5 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

in this particular passage from the Book of the Prophet Malachi isn't intended to cause us to be **afraid** of the Lord . . . to run and hide from the Lord . . . which is impossible to do. No, this biblical image of fear is intended to communicate our profound respect . . . our awe of the Lord . . . the Lord . . . who is great beyond our comprehension and yet chooses to dwell among us . . . with us . . . bless us . . . care for us . . .

But how do we respond?

iii. Consider another **image**, if you will.

The image is given us by Nicolaus Copernicus, a late 15th century/early 16th century scholar in many fields, but, in particular, that of astronomy . . .

Some may recall that he put forth a particular astronomical theory that was really shocking at the time. Copernicus formulated a theory that put the sun at the center of the universe, rather than the earth . . . which changed the whole way in which the universe was then viewed . . . had been viewed for centuries . . . In other words, rather than the Sun and, for that matter, any other planets, revolving around the

Page 6 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

Earth . . . it was the Earth that revolved around the Sun, along with other planets that did the same.

The image presents a significant challenge for us . . . oh, not because I think that any of us is holding on to an old understanding of astronomy an understanding not even taught in schools these days, nor has it been for centuries.

I would suggest that the significant challenge for us is just where we understand God to be . . . or for that matter, the place we have for him in our lives. **Do we see God at the center of our lives . . . or, do “we think that it is God’s job to circle around us?”** Has God become our **“administrative assistant . . . the one who answers prayers . . . our way . . . makes us peaceful and happy and successful . . . now”?**

Truthfully, there is nothing wrong with understanding that God **is** the one who answers prayers . . . that God **is** the **source** of **peace** . . .

Page 7 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

happiness . . . blessings . . . unless, that is, we have taken this one step further and also view God as the one who exists to **“serve me”** . . . and on occasion, I **may** give Him some time . . . on occasion . . . I may use any of the talents God has blessed me with to serve Him by serving others . . . on occasion . . . I may take some of my treasure and give it back so that the work needed to spread the Gospel . . . lead others to the Lord Jesus . . . care for the poor and the hungry . . . may happen. Yes, on occasion, I may do these things . . . so that this and more can continue

iv. This belief and conviction that God is truly to be the center of our lives calls for a conscious and committed change for each of us in our relationship with God . . . but a change, that none-the-less, will have **amazing, grace-filled** results . . . that give way to even more blessing in our lives.

Imagine . . . imagine if we really believed . . . truly were convicted and convinced that God is greater than me . . . greater than you . . . greater than any individual or thing we can possibly consider . . . if we did . . . why would we put anything else . . . **anyone else** . . . at the center of our life?

Page 8 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

v. There is an important mailing available for each household today . . . and of course, my first request is that you make certain you pick yours up before you leave . . . and yes, as always . . . remember your neighbors . . . those who are homebound or shut-in and who cannot get to Church . . . take them theirs . . . since first, and foremost . . . your visit to them will go a long, long way.

It is an important mailing since it not only details spiritual opportunities for the upcoming Seasons of Advent and Christmas . . . but opportunities to prayerfully discern the ways each of us can show our gratitude to God by giving God back a portion of our time . . . our talent . . . and yes, our treasure. That is stewardship . . . something we, called to be disciples of the Lord, are reminded is part of **being** a disciple.

In the area of Talent . . . this is an opportunity for individuals involved in a variety of ministries . . . both in the parish and outside the parish . . . to “re-commit” . . . but also an opportunity for **all** to consider new ministries . . .

In the area of Treasure . . . this is also an

Page 9 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

opportunity to prayerfully review your current level of giving and consider if an increase is possible at this time . . . and for any who have not yet enrolled in Faith Direct, our vehicle for electronic giving, to seriously consider enrolling now.

As the mailing asks, there are response forms included that are to be completed and returned, via the collection basket, next weekend . . .

But, I must say this: first, and foremost . . . the **starting point has to be for all of us . . . a conscious and committed choice to place God at the center of our lives . . .** not just making God a **part** of our lives . . . but recognizing that without God at the **center** . . . nothing else makes sense.

Without God at the center, returning to God a portion of the gift of time God has blessed us with will only remain something that is on a “list of to-do’s” . . . mixed in with many other things . . . seeing time with God as something that is nice, but not absolutely necessary since other items on that list will always get in the way . . .

Page 10 - The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year C - Continuation of Stewardship Effort (Talent and Treasure; Christmas Bazaar Weekend; Christmas Gift Tags Available) - Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Communion at 5:00 PM and 9:00 AM Masses - 12/13 November 2016 - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community - HOMILY

Without God at the center . . . no matter what gift or talent any of us may have been blessed with will all too easily become that gift or talent we hold fast to, for our own personal good . . . rather than sharing it for the good and need and benefit of others . . .

Without God at the center . . . sharing a portion of our treasure in gratitude for how God has blessed us so that the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ can continue . . . so that the Gospel can be shared . . . just will not happen . . .

Yes, today is a call to put God at the center of our lives . . . and trust . . . that from that center . . . not only will blessings go forth from us . . . but blessings will be returned to us countless times over.