

# LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

[www.orlaghinthecity.ie](http://www.orlaghinthecity.ie)



**THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME**

**16th November 2025**

**Luke 21:5** 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.”

**Luke 21:7** 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 he 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.

**Luke 21:9** “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; <sup>11</sup> there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

**Luke 21:12** “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 defense in advance; <sup>15</sup> for I 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.

## INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Towards the close of the liturgical year, the lectionary turns to the end of time and to the signs that signal the end. These passages can be difficult to read today because of the language and metaphors used.

## KIND OF WRITING

The passage is a good example of apocalyptic writing. Apocalypse means simply “revelation” and the function of such writing is to help people understand the times in which they are living and to encourage attitudes of faithfulness and resilience. The writing is often highly symbolic and, under the guise of describing the future, it offers a key to the present, naming the calibre of the times. Generally speaking, apocalyptic writing occurs at a time when the community of faith is threatened and its identity is being undermined. **The basic teaching is threefold: the faithfulness of God, in spite of appearances; the call to renewed conversion, in the light of infidelity; the call to endurance, in spite of apparently overwhelming odds.**

In our time, we need to be able to read the “signs of the times”, discover new resources of resilient fidelity and to walk once more the path of conversion.

## Thought for the day

When the news from the Middle East — the cradle of civilisation and faith — is so consistently dreadful, our dismay can easily devolve into despair. What about all the innocent lives lost? What of the old, the new-born, the newlyweds and so on? The devastation can be overwhelming, leaving us feeling both powerless and furious. And yet, at the centre of our faith is a deep conviction that the forces of evil and destruction are not, and will not be, the final word. Yes, it is terrible; but no, it is not the last word. God’s faithfulness in Christ’s resurrection assures us and invites us too to the same witness of fidelity, even against the odds.

KIERAN O’MAHONY OSA - [tarsus.ie](http://tarsus.ie)

The imagery in the gospel is not to be taken literally but is symbolic of the hard times that people might have to endure before the final victory of good over evil. This reading from Luke looks towards the second coming of Christ and Jesus warns his followers not to be distracted but to persevere in their faith for no harm will come to them. The preaching of Jesus is never aimed at frightening people into conversion so there is nothing Christian about using the Bible to predict a catastrophic end to the world.

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand, Year C

This gospel passage is a collection of many different sayings of Jesus, all of them relevant to a situation of crisis in the present or looming in the future. You will recognize their truth from your experience of small as well as big crises.

Lord, we quite rightly wonder at human achievements today –

- \* the exploration of outer space and of subatomic particles;
- \* supermarkets and shopping centers stocked with goods of every kind;
- \* all the modern means of communication: faxes, satellite television, the internet, smartphones

They are the temples of our modern world and we are like the disciples of Jesus, remarking how they are adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings.

Remind us that all these things we stare at,  
the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another.

*“Politics encircles us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with that snake.” ...Gandhi*

Lord, we thank you for those who enter public life

unafraid that they will be brought to judgement by everybody, seeing it rather as an opportunity to bear witness.

### **MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels**

#### **POINTERS FOR PRAYER**

1. Luke presents Jesus as a prophet, capable of reading the signs of the times, and one who offered wise and insightful advice on how to cope with difficult times. Who are the people you see who act like this in the troubled times we live in today? Maybe you yourself have been a calming influence in the face of turmoil within your family, parish, church, workplace, or elsewhere. Can you claim that gift and give thanks for being such a person?
2. Jesus alerts his listeners to the transitory nature of human grandeur and splendour. How have you been reminded of this truth? What lessons has this given you about life?
3. In any walk of life troubles will come. Jesus encourages his listeners to stand firm in such circumstances, telling them ‘your endurance will win your your lives’. When you are in the midst of inner turmoil and/or outer trouble or opposition, what have you found gives you the strength and ability to endure.

#### **JOHN BYRNE OSA -Intercom**

Profound socio-cultural changes are taking place and a religious crisis is shaking the foundation of Christianity.

**Let us focus on what is essential** Every Christian generation has its own problems, difficulties and needs. We must not lose our serenity but assume responsibility for ourselves. We are not being asked anything beyond our strength. We can count on the help of Jesus himself: *I will give you words and wisdom*. Even in an atmosphere of rejection and ill-will, we can practice the gospel and live with Christian wisdom and common sense.

**This is a time for witnessing.** Hard times should not be a reason for lamenting, nostalgia, or discouragement. It is not the time for resignation, passivity, or quitting. Jesus sees things differently. He tells us: *This will give you an opportunity to testify*. This is precisely when we must become humble but convincing witnesses of Jesus, of his message and of his project.

**Let us have patience.** The recommendation of Jesus for difficult times is this *By standing firm you will gain life*. The original term can be translated either as patience or perseverance. We Christians speak little of patience, but we need it more than ever. It is time to develop a Christian, patient, and tenacious way of life that will help us to respond to new situations and challenges without losing our peace or the clarity of our vision.

#### **JOSÉ A PAGOLA - Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C**

#### **DO NOT BE AFRAID**

There have always been disasters in the world. We face our own personal disasters too, when we lose a loved one, when diagnosed with a serious illness, when a relationship breaks down. At times like that we feel as if our world is ending. The recent pandemic comes to mind as an example. When we are facing a crisis, Jesus tells us not to be afraid. When we feel hopeless about the sadness and destruction in the world, he is there. We keep going as best we can, in the messiness and brokenness of life. God’s grace is with us and can change everything.

*We all have moments of darkness when things seem bleak. Think of a time the you experienced such helplessness. What helped you get through it? Where does your strength and comfort come from?*

*When we hear of natural disasters, pandemics, the destruction of great buildings or the fall of empires, it can feel likes ‘end times’. But in the midst of the chaos there are always those who bring light and hope. When have you seen this to be true?*

#### **TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT – Go Deeper**