

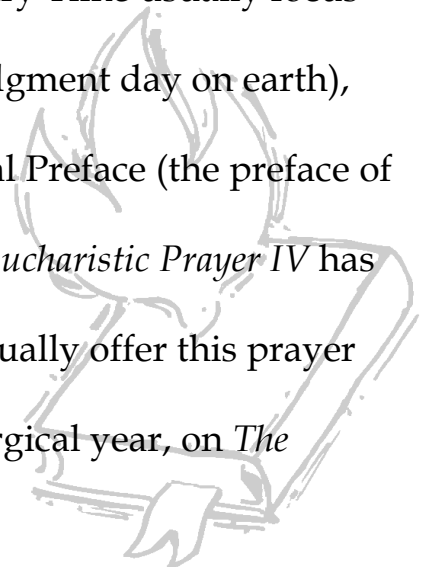
**Homily**  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday OT - C**  
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
November 16-17, 2019

Mal 3: 19-20  
Ps 98: 5-6, 7-8, 9  
2 Thes 3: 7-12  
Lk 21: 5-19

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On *The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time* each year, I often pray the one Eucharistic Prayer that I rarely use at the Mass – *The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer*. We are told that for a long time in our Church, *The Roman Canon* was the only Eucharistic Prayer allowed to be offered at Mass. Later in Church history, the oldest of our Eucharistic Prayers (Eucharistic Prayer II – from St. Hippolytus) was allowed, followed by Eucharistic Prayer III (which focuses more on the role of the Holy Spirit).

I use *Eucharistic Prayer IV* on this particular celebration for various reasons. Because the last two Sundays in Ordinary Time usually focus on the *Eschaton* or *Parousia* (the final day and judgment day on earth), the last Sunday of the liturgical year has a special Preface (the preface of Christ the King) which needs to be used. Since *Eucharistic Prayer IV* has its own special preface which must be used, I usually offer this prayer on the Sunday prior to Christ the King each liturgical year, on *The*



*Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

The focus of *Eucharistic Prayer IV* centers on the history of our salvation. Similar to one of the *Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation*, *Eucharistic Prayer IV* reminds us that in the Old Testament, one prophet after another admonished us to follow the Lord's commandments and precepts if we wished to reach the kingdom of heaven. We are taught that the chosen people of the Old Testament were not very faithful to these admonitions and, as a result, were exiled from their Promised Land, only to return and rebuild the temple that had been destroyed because of their lack of faith.

In this prayer, we are taught that God loves us, even when we, at times, do not love God. God so loved us that he sent down his only begotten Son as an example of faith which we are called to follow. If we follow this Son's example in the way we live, serve, pray and most of all love in God's name, then we follow this path that the Son provides for us to the kingdom of heaven, where there will be no more sadness, death or suffering.

I find hope in this prayer because, as you know, our history as a

collective society has not always been the most positive of one. We learn through our history that when God created us, he gave us the opportunity to live in a garden for the rest of our corruption – without suffering or corruption – in the presence of the God who wanted to build a perpetual relationship with us.

We learned in our history that those before us wanted more – having a life devoid of corruption was not enough – so we sought out a life that distinguished good from evil, abandoning a life perpetually good for that which we were tempted to explore. Because of that “Original Sin,” both Adam and Eve and those that followed were exiled from a life devoid of corruption and place in the world in which we now live.

As our history played out, time and time again we chose to turn away from God, preferring the temptations of the created world over the divine. When God gave us the options to follow his direction over our fellow human beings, humanity would side with the human and all the sins that are attached with the human being. From the judges to the kings to our current presidents and prime ministers, humanity continues to believe that our ways are far more desirable to God’s. As

we continue to learn, those ways form peaks and valleys in our history, as governments and leaders come and grow, become powerful and then lose their power.

If we understand our history and the story of the gospel, we learn that throughout all the changes in history, God is still God and God continues to love us, hoping that we eventually change the way we live our lives so that we may turn back to him. We constantly abandon God though God never abandons us. Realizing that we had no ability to find the path to heaven on our own, God the Father sends down God the Son to impart on us God the Holy Spirit, the gift of love that bonds the Father to the Son and bonds the Holy Trinity to all of us. We are taught that if we embrace this gift of the Spirit and follow its path, then we are able to see beyond the desires of the created world to pursue the only things that really are important – to love God and to love each other in God’s name.

These themes are very evident in this weekend’s scripture readings as well. Our first reading comes from the last book of the Old Testament and the Book of Malachi, a text written after the Chosen People return

from exile due to their disobedience to God. In this book, the prophet instructs us that a new “Messiah” would arrive to save all people, not the political type of Messiah that would restore the earthly Jerusalem back to its original glory but a spiritual Messiah that would lead us to a “new” Jerusalem, the new metaphorical Garden of Eden only found in heaven.

Our second reading from Second Thessalonians (3: 12) repeats the same theme from First Thessalonians (4: 11), a theme addressed softly in other languages but is very stern in English – to get to heaven, we must learn to chew our own food and to mind our own business. We are taught that it does not matter what other folks possess or what they are doing; what is important is how we conduct our own lives and whether that life conforms to the message of the gospel.

The gospel reading today unites these readings with a basic theme – others will mistreat us because of the lives we lead but not to worry about what they say or do. All we have to do is live a good Christian life and then we will find the pathway to heaven.

I bring all this up because in my life as a priest, I have come to learn

that unless I am following the way of God, there is no way that I can ask any of you to do the same. From the cycle in which our humanity is mired right now, the largest religious denomination within the United States (according to the Pew Research Center) consist in the “nones;” almost twenty-five percent of those who live in this country attach themselves to no religious affiliation at all. Concerning those who call themselves Catholic, less than twenty-five percent of them attend Mass on a regular basis and less than a third believe that Jesus actually is present, body, soul and divinity, in the presence of that consecrated host in our tabernacle (as signified by the tabernacle lamp). Our collective ability to evangelize has not been strong in recent times and the change of heart has to begin with me before I can preach about God and the Church to anyone else.

As I have preached to you these last few months, we need to invest in a great deal of change if we ever wish to see heaven. If I am not living like Christ, then really I can't call myself Christian, nor can anyone else. The changes I have been told to make (according to the parishioners whom I have visited) begin with the renovation of the houses in which

the priests live, which have been neglected for various reasons. As I have written in the bulletin this week, the cost for these renovations has been minimal and that Fr. Dan and I are paying for over half the cost ourselves; we have to do our part if we expect you to do yours.

As we have arrived at our penultimate weekend of this liturgical year, perhaps we can make time to remind ourselves about why we were created, who created us and what our purpose is for living. Perhaps in a spirit of evangelization we might invite others to join us at this celebration, for their sake as well as for ours. If each of us do our part in building this body of Christ, this Church that Christ established, then we do not fall into the trap that our ancestors were tempted to follow over and over again but that we may pave the way to save souls, starting with our own. Let us learn this lesson well and share it... and live it! ... with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.