



Reflection from Deacon Ross Beaudoin

Have you had enough drama this week? The mid-term election was the big attention-getter. And we aren't through with that yet!

Another element of this week was the barrage of ballistic missiles launched by North Korea. These high-stakes weapon demonstrations trouble Japan and South Korea and drive Washington nuts. Let's hope it doesn't start a war.

In the background to these events, hurricane Nicole churned into Florida with homes collapsing into the ocean in many coastal cities. Florida had already been hit hard by Hurricane Ian a month ago.

War continues in Ukraine. Immigrants on boats are denied entry into Italy. The list goes on....

In the scenario of the Church "liturgical year" this Sunday marks the beginning of the second-to-last week. This week focuses on the "end times." There certainly have been enough human-inspired events and natural disasters lately to cause one to reflect on "end times."

The truth is that there have always been people who see in the craziness of our human life and natural disasters signs of the arrival of the end of the world. That was true thousands of years ago and is certainly true today. Among early Christians many were consumed by the idea that the end was near and Jesus' return would be in their lifetime! Those Christians applied to themselves the words of the Prophet Malachi in today's first reading: "Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven, when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble and the day that is coming will set them on fire, leaving them neither root nor branch."

In today's gospel Luke says that "...the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." "You [will] hear of wars and insurrections..." (Oh-oh, did Luke foresee the insurrection of January 6? Uh, I think not.)

Yet the reality remains that the course of our human condition plus inevitable natural disasters that afflict our planet cause us to consider "what is really going on here? What does this mean for us?"

Jesus points the way. "See that you are not deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them!" Jesus then elaborates about tough trials and natural disasters that are bound to come. But he adds, "Do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not be the end.... By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

And that's where the rubber meets the road. Messy elections, wars, missiles, climate change, student debt problems, inflation, hurricanes – you name it. They are all part of this world that we must live in. And Jesus says very pointedly, "By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

*Blessings,
Deacon Ross*