

**Catholic Church of the Beatitudes
Santa Barbara, CA**

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C – Nov. 13, 2016

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Reflections on Malachai 3:19-20a, 2 Thess 3:7-12, Luke 21:5-19

We have experienced a very traumatic week with the recent election of Donald Trump as President-elect. It has been a year like no other of negative rhetoric on the campaign trail. Before writing this homily I needed to work through some of my own feelings; I still have more grieving to do.

It is said that wherever we turn, *there* is the face of God. God is the Creator of this amazing, diverse, unfolding universe. God is our provider who gives us the opportunity to grow on every level. Through the Spirit of Wisdom we are guided within if we learn to listen to Spirit's inner promptings. How hard it is to remember all this when we feel sucked into so much violence in speech and downright disrespect! Where is the face of God in such bitterness and rancor?

In today's first reading, from the prophet Malachi, Yahweh speaks in violent terms toward evildoers, claiming that they will be burned up—no root or branch will be left. These words might seem harsh, as the prophet pictures God as an unmerciful judge. However the poor and marginalized are those whom God loves with great kindness and wholehearted compassion.

Many of us fear that the marginalized will be forgotten or harmed when the new administration takes power:

- The undocumented will grieve as they face the fear of deportation.
- The steel worker, factory worker, and coal miner who have lost their jobs will wait in distress and perhaps despair for employment, so they can feed and care for their families.
- The LGBTQ Community is already apprehensive that the strides they have achieved may be reversed.

- The homeless seem to have lost hope of finding a place to live, a job, and food to sustain them and their families.
- Many refugees are greeted daily with contempt, derision, and closed doors.
- The mentally challenged, the sick, and the dying seek refuge in a dysfunctional, profit-based health care system.

The list is much longer. At times it feels overwhelming. Some of us voted democrat and some voted republican, all seeking to elect a candidate who would give us hope. But realistically, no candidate can meet all our needs. Maybe it is time to stop seeking one person, or one political party, to save us. Is it finally time to work together and reach across the aisle? . . . With such a divide, where do we begin?

I once attended a workshop on *civility*, where we were encouraged to get to know someone who thinks differently by sharing our stories. Together we would find some common ground upon which to build. We didn't have to agree with each other, but we were challenged to come to a deeper respect for one another.

We are in an interesting time in our country! In her concession speech, Hillary Clinton stated that we need to give the president-elect the opportunity to govern. There may be some changes that we can support. However we will need to be on guard when the principles we stand for are undermined; we will need to take action to stand and speak out when those who are discriminated against either by race, sexual orientation, religion or socioeconomic status are marginalized or disrespected. Jesus loved so compassionately because he saw the poor as precious in God's sight; he treated them with deep respect. He calls us

to channel our negative feelings into deep, compassionate love, and to become defenders of justice!

In Paul's letter to the Church in Thessalonica we are urged to work night and day *living* the Gospel; and if we don't work, he adds, we shouldn't expect to be fed! Paul's sense of urgency is almost palpable.

Today's Gospel contains sobering words about the end times. With this election we are experiencing the end of a socially progressive era as we face the beginning of something else—something quite different. The future never comes with a map of how to get there! Perhaps the cost of admission to this new era will be out of reach for many of our brothers and sisters. The Gospel puts it bluntly: Chaotic days may ensue, marked by upheavals and even violence.

Recently Elizabeth Warren urged us to support the president elect in everything that we can. But when it comes to principles that we hold true, we must stand up for them with courage and strength every day and in every way. Luke reassures us that "By patient endurance [we] will save

[our] lives." Maybe we can extend these words to say that "By patient endurance through concentrated action *together*, for the good of all, we will save our nation and perhaps even our world."

The future of our country is no place for sissies or wimps. We are being called on to muster every ounce of strength, courage, and especially *love*, through compassion toward those who think the way we do and those with whom we do *not* see eye to eye.

May we grow deeper in our contemplative lives so that we are anchored in Jesus the Christ. And may we act as devoted and committed members of the Body of Christ!

Let me close with the words of John Philip Newell: "We are created for love. There is no other energy that can truly bring together, individually and collectively, what has been torn apart by fear and hatred. Love frees us from our bondage to the ego. It awakens us to the holy desire for justice. Love is pregnant with hope. Without it there can be no rebirth." Amen!

Let us pray

(from *Praying with the Earth*, by John Philip Newell)

We wake to the freedom to begin again.
We wake to the mercy of the sun's redeeming light.
Always new, always gift, always blessing.

May our enemy become our friend, O God,
that we may share earth's goodness...
May our enemy become our friend, O God,
that we may remember our shared birth in you.

May we grow in grace!
May we grow in gratitude!
May we grow in wisdom that our enemy
may become our friend.