

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Bishop Gerard Bergie

At the present moment, some say the world is a mess. They cite the growing opioid crisis, social disintegration, political polarization, climate change and the confusion and division we see in the Church at this moment to support their opinion. In the most extreme case, some even see all of this as a sign that ‘the end is near’. The Gospel for the Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time directly addresses these concerns. Jesus states, “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.” Jesus makes it clear that we will not know when the end of the world will take place. In fact, in the Gospel of St. Matthew he states, “But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matthew 24:36). Jesus reminds us that rather than spending time reading the ‘signs of the times’ in order to predict the end of the world, we should be focusing on building up God’s kingdom by being faithful witnesses. In the Gospel, after listing a number of troubling signs, he states, “This will give you an opportunity to testify”. We do this by being a light in the darkness of fear and confusion. This involves bringing people to Christ. This is how we witness to what is good, true and beautiful in this world. In the Second Reading, St. Paul states, “For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work.” This can be our response when faced with great challenges in life and in our world. It is easy to feel so overwhelmed that we do nothing or we just complain about the problems. We are called to respond with a steadfast faith, believing that the Lord is with us and that he will not let anything harm us. If we work at building our spiritual resilience then we will triumph in times of confusion – “By your endurance you will gain your souls.”