Spirituality
Scripture for Life
Voices of Sisters
Spirituality



A woman holds a rosary as members of a Catholic group take part in a Eucharistic procession near the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Broadview facility in Chicago Oct. 11, 2025. The group had hoped to share holy Communion with detainees at the facility. (OSV News/Reuters/Jeenah Moon)



by Sr. Mary M. McGlone

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In Jesuit Fr. Bill Cain's book *The Diary of Jesus Christ*, Jesus comments that a soldier rebuked him for singing Mary's "Magnificat." He said it was subversive, calling for everything to change: that hunger and inequality would be no more, the wealthy would lose and the poor gain, the power of overlords would evaporate. Jesus summed it up saying, "In short, treason to him; the Messiah to us."

Some 500 years before Mary sang her song, the prophet Malachi announced that the day of the Lord was coming — a day that would be very much like Mary's song. In today's Gospel, Jesus predicts that the Temple will be destroyed just like the treasures of the rich and supremacy of evildoers. Then he explains how the evildoers will try to defend themselves against the Gospel.

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 16, 2025

Malachi 3:19-20a
Psalm 98
2 Thessalonians 3:7-12
Luke 21:5-19

Jesus goes further than Malachi or Mary in his proclamation. As we reach the climax of Luke's Gospel, Jesus talks about what Paul called the birth pangs (Romans 8:22) of the age to come. Malachi and Jesus expected the "day of the Lord" to come in tremendous turmoil. Truth would be obscured by imposters claiming to speak for God. Wars would break out and revolutions would happen inside peoples' homelands. Nature itself would seem to turn on Earth's creatures. Disease would rampage. No one would escape the disastrous plagues in store.

Jesus added that the faithful would be as persecuted as was their Master. Tragically, we can put contemporary names on Jesus' predictions about the fate of the good and innocent. Kidnapped children from Ukraine and innocent people of color in our U.S. cities are being seized. Instead of being heard as voices of justice, defenders of the victims like California Sen. Alex Padilla are subject to detention and mistreatment. Russian Orthodox priests who refused to pray for Russian victory in Ukraine have been defrocked. In many places, Hispanic parishioners are fearful of attending Mass or reluctant to participate in other parish activities because of ICE raids.

Facing all this, Jesus gives us the enigmatic advice: "Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking." How many wish that they could say that in their hour of need, God gave them words that all their adversaries were "powerless to resist"? In the last chapters of the Gospels we see that not even Jesus overcame his adversaries with wisdom. "Not a hair on your head will be destroyed"? Aren't only the bald likely to believe that? Jesus says it will lead to your giving testimony.

There's no doubt that innocent people are suffering. Yet, they are not ignored. Courageous people are standing up. Citizens patrol city streets watching for ICE and send out warnings to innocents in danger. Mayors have decreed that their police forces will not collaborate with masked agents whisking people away.

In July, at least 25 rabbis were arrested in South Dakota Sen. John Thune's office while lobbying for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza. In September, according to the Associated Press, bishops and women religious spoke about immigration conflicts and "decried the Trump administration's hard-line policies for tearing apart families, inciting fear and upending American church life."

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A draft document from the chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on African American Affairs defended diversity, equity and inclusion, saying, "Diversity reaches out to all people. … Equity is the truth of the justice of God applied to everyone. … Inclusion is living the law of the Lord as one."

The bishop who wrote that may find himself in the good and holy company of those "hated by all."

The disciples asked Jesus, "What sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" Instead of taking up that question, Jesus simply said, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name."

The command, "be not deceived," means that we are to read the signs of our times and discern truth from deception, good from evil, actions that are life-giving from the death-dealing. Jesus' command implies that as we discern, our prayerful judgment on our era must lead to giving witness. The secret of this passage is that the very act of acting on behalf of love and truth opens the window to the wisdom that our adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

These are messianic times, the day of the Lord is here and coming. As is true of everything in the Gospel, we cannot predict the details, much less the outcome. It is only by acting in concert with Jesus' mission that we will find ourselves in the place of wisdom, persecution and courage. There's no way to theorize ourselves into it.

Jesus said, "By your perseverance you will secure your lives." Shall we try it?