

Thought for the Week
17th November 2019
33rd Sunday in Ordinary time

Here we are in the end days of the Church's year: Next Sunday we celebrate the joyous feast of Christ the King and the following week Advent begins and with it the start of the new cycle. Perhaps endings and beginnings are what this week's readings are about.

As human beings we can tend to be pessimistic. It is almost as if we are hard wired to spot danger, as certainly our ancestors needed to. For them detecting a threat came before spotting a source of food. Thankfully, there are also many optimists around and they are the ones to bring spontaneity and creativity to the whole group. Ask a pessimist to try something new and they will shy away. Creativity leads to new opportunities and it is what has driven human kind over millennia and led to new discoveries.

As the crowd gathered in the temple where Jesus was, they might have marvelled at its beauty and intricacy and the length of time it took to build. They might have half listened to the teachers explaining God's plan handed down since the time of Abraham, whilst their minds were on more earthly matters. At last Jesus intervened and said:

'In a short time these stones will be crushed into dust and nothing will be left.'

He was talking about the end times. The Jews worried about the desolation these times might bring, but they also had a hope that the Messiah would come to save them. Jesus didn't answer their question as to when this might happen saying that, only the Father knows of that time. But he did say that, as a people, they would persevere and *'not a hair on your heads will be touched,'* because he knew they had faith in God and not in men.

The same applies to us in the twenty first century, a time of rapid change as well as terrible wars and inequalities, with people in many parts of the world hungry, oppressed and yearning for things to be better. It was the same for the Jews who regrouped and scattered when they were forced from their lands after their temple was destroyed: but as a people they soon realised that this end was only the start of a new beginning.

They rebuilt their belief in Yahweh and regained their hope for the future. Around the same time Christians had also spread out across the world and regrouped themselves. Slowly they all began to understand that Jesus was speaking of a new beginning that would not just be in Jerusalem but would reach out to the whole world with the promise of faith, of hope and of love, each given and promised by God.

Today this healing and saving continues to be preached by Jew and Gentile. And so I think we should cease to worry and be pessimistic about the present times and its troubles and remember instead the words of Jesus that God will triumph. Things change and the old world dies and we may mourn it, but a new world is born and with it joy and hope that sustains us and provides the impetus to continue. One day all peoples will be reunited for all eternity but until that day comes let's remember,

'The favours of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.' We can all be optimistic!

A Parishioner