

Chaplain's Bulletin November 16, 2025



Dear Folks,

As we get close to the end of the liturgical year, we start thinking about endings in general. Life is full of endings and new beginnings, but we still tend to think of things we are used to always being there. The real truth is that nothing that is of the earth is guaranteed for tomorrow (or even later today).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have an apocalyptic chapter ("apocalypse" is Greek for "removing the veil" which in Latin is "revelatio.") This chapter starts with predicting the destruction of the temple. The temple was a huge, sturdy building, and a critical part of the Israelites relationship to God. It had been destroyed in 587 B.C. which was devastating, but you know how bad we humans can be about learning the lessons of history. Jesus' words would have been a shock, and then he segues to the end of the world. The book of revelation will develop this more.

I would encourage you not to pay attention to anyone who claims to have figured out when the end of the world will be. Jesus said we would not know and instead encouraged us to focus on being ready whenever it comes, whether in five billion years, or in 5....4....3...2 you get the idea.

Getting ready centers around faithfully doing the work that God gave us to do and holding the things of the earth in a loose grip.

Of course, there are other kinds of endings. We each experience the end of the world when we die. We also can lose our health, our material possessions, our position in the world, etc. They can vanish without warning.

Civilizations can fall. The Roman Empire lasted for a thousand years, and I believe people expected it to just continue. When it crumbled and was literally overrun with barbarians it was devastating. The structures of education, law and order, the building of roads and aqueducts and things that kept civilization going crumbled. The Church kept a lot of things going when the government could not, maintaining knowledge and education, building universities and hospitals, and other good things. (That was a time when you could not depend upon government. What about our time?) I recommend the books "How the Irish Saved Civilization" by Thomas Cahill and "How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization" by Thomas E Woods.

When the industrial revolution came, many ways of life abruptly vanished, and people caught in the middle were thrown into desperate poverty (Charles Dickens did a lot to raise awareness of this). I know some heroic Christians moved in to help, but perhaps we can learn to do better.

We seem to be on the cusp of the Artificial Intelligence revolution, and that could do the same thing. It looks like it will be at least as radical as the industrial revolution. How will Christians be called to respond to people who are caught in the middle of this? Matthew 25 describes a little chit chat that Jesus is going to have with each one of us about how we respond to His call. Being aware of that, what should be our focus now?

Blessings,
Fr. Jim