

NOVEMBER 13, 2016



THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



MALACHI 3:19-20A

PSALM 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

2 THESSALONIANS 3:7-12

LUKE 21:5-19

REFLECTION

I was in eighth grade and we were unsupervised, waiting for basketball practice to begin. Everyone stopped talking when I came into the locker room. I heard other kids whispering and then someone said, "Please leave!" The voices of a dozen classmates echoed in unison, followed by hushed giggles. They were talking to me. "Leave!" Singled out, ashamed, and feeling very alone, I swallowed a big lump in my throat and went away. I don't remember telling anyone else what happened, or feeling like I had anyone to turn to. All I know is that it felt like my world came crashing down on me that winter night and that I had never experienced so much hurt. Today's readings touch on "end of the world" themes, and although my experience in the locker room may seem minor in comparison to earthquakes, war, and famine, my fourteen-year-old self couldn't see beyond tomorrow. Some might read today's Gospel as a prediction of future disasters for which we must brace ourselves. Another way to interpret Jesus' words is that Jesus is simply calling out the devastating things that have always happened and continue to happen now. Jesus is not necessarily predicting a bleak future, but rather the need to persevere in times of struggle. There's a strange comfort in knowing that God is with us—in good times and bad, even when it's not obvious. As the prophet Malachi promises, there can be hope and healing in the midst of every crisis.



To Write Love on Her Arms is a nonprofit movement dedicated to presenting hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. The movement exists to encourage, inform, inspire, and also to invest directly into treatment and recovery. Learn more at their website: <http://twloha.com>

ACTION

Someone, somewhere, right now is feeling like it is the end of their world. Maybe it's the loss of a loved one, an addiction they are fighting, a natural disaster, or just the struggle to fit in. You might not be able to change their circumstances, but you can be sensitive to their needs. Other people sometimes silently carry around their hurts and wounds. Keep that in mind this week as you practice compassion toward others.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● Have you ever felt like your whole world was crashing down on you at once? How did you get through it? Looking back, where was Jesus?