

## Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 November

This weekend is Saturday the 16th and Sunday 17th of November, beginning the Thirty Third Week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing: "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." As they sing? I listen. I listen with my whole attention, with my mind and with my heart, so that I may really hear the word of God, and keep it.

In the last few Sundays before the Feast of Christ the King (which marks the end of the Church year) the readings take on a decidedly sober feel as the end of the world is described in great and vivid detail. This weekend's reading from the Prophet Malachi foretells the end of the world and paints a somber picture of a separation between the righteous and the unrighteous. These are challenging readings that encourage us to look at ourselves closely and see whether we are ready for our own judgement and the return of Christ. On hearing readings like this it is tempting to think that Christianity is blood-thirsty and positively looks forward to the demise of the ungodly. Far from it: Jesus continually stresses that there will be more rejoicing in heaven over the return of one sinner than ninety-nine righteous people. This weekend's reading is from the Prophet Malachi.

What does that word the "ungodly" make you think of? Who or what do you think might be considered as ungodly in today's society?

Malachi predicts the rising of the Sun of righteousness accompanied by great liberation and rejoicing. Can you see promises of joy and liberation in today's reading?

Scholars think that Malachi was prophesying more than four hundred years before Jesus was born and yet his Prophecies, like those of Isaiah, failed to awaken the hearts of the Jewish people of 1st Century Palestine. As you listen to the reading again, consider how people respond to Prophetic figures in our day.

People who fight against injustice; who remind the world of the Kingdom values and who seek to defend those who cannot defend themselves. As this reflection ends, ask the Lord for the gifts you need to be a prophetic voice in the world?