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-- Predicting the future is always a tricky thing. Pollsters found that out this past week. And it was no less true 2,000 years ago. By the time the words of Luke's gospel were written, the disaster of the temple's destruction had already taken place.

-- Luke, no doubt, recalled that Jesus had made some remarks about the temple over 40 years earlier, remarks that either he himself heard or that he heard through some of the apostles.

-- But the most important point in the gospel isn't the prediction of a future event. It comes at the end of the passage: *By your perseverance you will secure your lives.* Jesus calls us to persevere in our faith.

-- That short line unites the concerns we bring to the table this weekend. For one thing, we are praying with our sisters and brothers with health conditions who are being (have been) anointed at our Saturday Mass.

-- Secondly, the diocese has asked us to reflect on God's mercy as we deal with those among us who are homosexual or who have family members who are homosexual. Many of them have felt hurt by the Church or Church members. How do we minister to them while upholding our beliefs?

-- Finally, we as a nation have concluded a contentious election, perhaps one of the most—if not the most—in my memory. How do we heal our divisions and come together in common purpose?

-- A short answer might be: We keep on living our faith, which calls us to love and care for one another, despite our differences of religion, ethnic background, political beliefs, or even sexual orientation.

-- We persevere in being faithful to our teaching on subjects such as marriage. We uphold the marriage bond between a man and a woman. But we do not use this teaching to beat down our sisters and brothers of homosexual orientation. Hate has no part in Christian teaching.

-- We uphold the human dignity of all people, of all religions, races and political persuasions. We never allow anger to be our dominant emotion, even when we see what we truly believe is injustice. We counter hate with love.

-- Living out the details of this vision is hard, and occasionally we will have legitimate disagreements on how best to do this. But we should never allow those disagreements to degenerate into fear and loathing of another person.

-- St. Paul reminded his people that they were still living in the real world and needed to work to contribute to the common good. Each of us must do what we can—in our families, communities, workplaces—to work for the good of all people, especially those who are sick, poor, powerless, or discriminated against. We must do this in our own situations in life.

-- We have to counter hate with love, exclusion with welcome, rejection with acceptance, false belief with the truth. And love, in its highest form of selfless care for the good of ourselves and others, must be our primary motivation.

-- To the extent we make a sincere effort, however imperfect, to live out this vision, in the words of the prophet Malachi, there will arise in our world the sun of justice with its healing rays.