**2 Lent 2025**

 Remember “Chicken Little”? *The sky is falling, the sky is falling, the*

 *sky is falling!* Chicken Little, otherwise known as "Henny Penny" and

sometimes as "Chicken Licken", is a European [folk tale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore) with a moral in

the form of a [cumulative tale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumulative_tale) about a [chicken](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken) who believes that the

world is coming to an end. The phrase *The sky is falling!* features

prominently in the story, and has passed into the English language as a

common idiom indicating a [hysterical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hysteria) or mistaken belief that disaster is

imminent. Similar stories go back more than 25 centuries and that

chicken continues to be working in a variety of ways these days.

 When we were kids, we dared each other to do things that were

dangerous or otherwise we shouldn’t have been doing. Being a dare

devil was kind of a right of passage, especially for the boys, and if you

hesitated or declined to get involved in the dare you were called a

chicken! Interesting twist there. Whatever the dare, everyone usually

made it through virtually unscathed, although there was the

bruises or sprained ankles. But those sorts of temporary afflictions

were more tolerable than being called a chicken! We all have

stories we could tell, right?

 I don’t preach secular politics from the pulpit. One of the reasons I

retired from St. Gabriel’s in 2018 is that some of the leaders wanted me

to preach against Donald Trump in his first term. They told me that

Jesus was a Democrat. Really. There’s a word for that: Anachronism.

My friends insisted that under the Trump regime the sky was falling. Lo

and behold, Trump was out in 2020 and Biden was in, but now the

other side was insisting that the sky was falling. And here we are in

2025 in The Donald’s second term and, guess what, the sky is falling! I

have a feeling Chicken Little is going to be alive and well for another 25

centuries.

 To be sure, really bad things do happen in history. I’m old enough to

remember my relatives talking about WWII—two of my uncles fought

in it—and there was deep concern that the world was coming to an

end, especially following Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We’re still here. And

lots of bad things have happened in the world since then—9/11 for

instance—and lots of bad things are happening in today’s world as I

speak. The world will end someday, one way or another, but probably

nor anytime soon. God is in charge.

 The world Jesus lived in 2,000 ago was a Chicken Little world. The sky

was falling all over the place. Natural disasters. Political unrest. Unholy

alliances between church and state. Wars and rumors of wars. Etc., etc.

Today’s gospel story from Luke is instructive in this regard. The

Pharisees, usually working against Jesus, here are warning him that

Herod was out to kill him. But it’s not clear they if they were being

disingenuous and simply hoping Jesus in fear would just leave the area

behind. And we’re pretty sure Herod was not trying to kill him, because

of how things turned out on Good Friday.

 Well, either way, Jesus was not a chicken and he wasn’t afraid of any

of them. Some of His teaching was apocalyptic but not apocalypse now.

Jesus was taking the high road and the long view as he made His way to

Jerusalem to meet His destiny on Good Friday. He was not chicken

and he was not playing chicken, but was following His Abba Father into

the most critical moment in the history of the world: His Death and

Resurrection. Those events were the beginning of the end. Everything

before that led up to that, and everything after that is a fulfillment of

God’s promises for a new heaven and a new earth—God’s Kingdom

come and coming into the world…world without end, as we say in our

prayers.

 And so, in that sense we Christians believe that we are living in the

end times. To the casual observer nothing has changed, but through

the eyes of faith, everything has changed. *Thy Kingdom come, thy will*

*be done on earth as it is in heaven.* The future comes to us in the now,

moment by moment. As St. Paul writing to the Colossians would say,

Christ is becoming all in all from the sub-atomic to the cosmic. To be a

 Christian is to have a mind-blowing experience every day! Better even

than sex, drugs and rock ‘n roll! And we don’t need to foretell the end

of time by speculations about the rapture and various kinds of

millennial interpretations. Again, God is in charge.

 Christians, we’re not chickens! We are sheep, but that’s for another

homily. Don’t be chicken in the face of the trials and tribulations of the

world, the flesh and the devil. Likewise, don’t be like Chicken Little tied

up in fear and anxiety waiting for that other shoe to drop. The sky is not

falling. Use this Lenten season to remember and practice faith, hope

and love. Remember the Christian martyrs who were willing to die for

the faith, right down to the Christians martyred in Syria last week.

Practice courage mixed with joy. Above all, when you encounter

folks who are chicken and Chicken Little, bring them words of sanity.

Bring them words of reason. Bring them words of the peace which

passes understanding. Bring them words of encouragement and good

cheer. Bring them Jesus Christ through your healing words and actions.

**May it be so.**