

Alleluia, alleluia! Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. Alleluia!

Mark 13:24-32

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

Mark isn't trying to frighten his readers (remember, he's already writing to a persecuted & oppressed people) The opposite, he's filling them with joy and with hope. He's telling of a new creation, when the old order will pass away. On that day there will be no need for sun or sunlight, because the glory of the Lord will enlighten & govern the Universe.

But when will that day come? That's not a question that we should be anxious or preoccupied with, because an essential part of our faith in Christ Jesus is that we should be awake & watchful at all times, living our lives here & now ready to greet the Lord. May today's Sunday celebration renew our hope and joy in the Risen Lord and may we be renewed in our efforts to make God's kingdom present to all.

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY

Year B

17th November 2024

"Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away, but My Words Will Not Pass Away"



We come to the Thirty-third and penultimate Sunday in Ordinary Time. Next Sunday the liturgical year is crowned with the glorious feast of Christ the King, but today, we are invited to reflect on the mystery of the end-time, which we do so, in the confidence of faith; a faith that proclaims that Christ will come again in glory and that those who have prepared themselves to receive him will live with him for ever. All our readings today, nourish and strengthen this great faith. But let us not miss the point – that life with God is determined here and now; how we live our lives each day of our life.

Opening Prayer

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good.

Daniel 12:1-3

'At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.'

Scholars disagree when it comes to dating the book of Daniel. Some say it was written around 530 BC for the Jews in exile in Babylon; whilst others maintain that it was composed much later, between 167 and 164 BC during Syrian persecution. Whatever the period, the Jewish people were facing hardship and suffering and Daniel's visions seek to sustain their faith and hope. They teach that God always has the last word and that faithfulness to his laws is always rewarded. Today's passage reflects on the end time and there is a recognition of happiness after death; a development of a doctrine of personal immortality, in which God rewards those who have lived good lives.

In faith, let us commend all our departed Brothers and sisters to the Lord.

Psalm 15(16):5,8-11

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize. I keep the Lord ever in my sight: since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; even my body shall rest in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right hand happiness for ever.

Hebrews 10:11-14,18

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. He, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place forever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

“The five verses of this Sunday's second reading are taken from the conclusion of the long development in the Letter to the Hebrews on the priesthood of Christ, our high priest. The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice comes from the fact that only he is Priest in the full sense of the term... Christ offered a perfect sacrifice, once and for all. He returned to the Father to offer it to him, and he does not need to repeat it. This is why he is not standing at his ministry; he has completed his priestly ministry - his service - with his passover; from now on he is no longer standing in the attitude befitting a servant, but seated at the right hand of God”. (Days of the Lord. Volume 5)
Let us thank the Lord Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, who continually intercedes for each one of us.

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, O Lord, we pray, that what we offer in the sight of your majesty may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness.

Prayer after Communion

We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery, humbly imploring, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity.