

## **November 18, 2018**

Dan 12:1-3; Heb 10:11-14; Mk 13:24-32

### Reflection on Mass:

After we have heard the Word of God proclaimed, and have been able to reflect on it with the aid of the homily and the benefit of a minute of silence, we all stand. This time after hearing the Lord speak to us lets us join together as a single body after we have been individually encountering the Lord. We rise to affirm our common faith by professing that faith out loud with our brothers and sisters, and we turn to the Father with petitions for ourselves and the whole world. This is a time where we join to all those Christians in the world who hold to the catholic (that is little “c” which means universal, authentic, Christian faith expressed in the creed), and we join to all those in the world in need as we (as the Body of Jesus) offer prayers to the Father in Jesus’ name. In faith we turn to the God we have praised and listened to, and we look to God’s great promise of love and fidelity, expressed through the whole of scripture, and ask for the world to be blessed and helped by God’s power and mercy.

### Homily:

Anyone who has been around for a few decades has heard lots of predictions of the end of the world. There have been 154 published dates proposed for the end of the world from the time of Jesus till now - by the way the latest one was this past April - but we are still here, whew! Some of these predictions came from saints, holy men and woman of various traditions, crackpot philosophers and preachers, and some renowned scientific figures as well (Christopher Columbus predicted 1656, and Isaac Newton said the end would be in 2000). All of this trying to calculate upcoming disasters is putting our energy in the wrong place. About the end of the world Jesus himself says: *But of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angles in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.* So where should we really be putting our energy?

Our energy should be not in trying to predict the end of the world, not in fear and worry, and not in just pretending that it won’t happen. Rather than any of these places, when we look face to face with possible disaster (be it the end of the world or other tragedies in our lives) we should put our energy into hope. The first reading speaks of the end times as *a time unsurpassed in distress* a time when *others shall be in everlasting horror and disgrace.* However, *everyone who is found written in the book [shall escape] ... [and] the wise shall shine brightly like the stars in the firmament.* Bad times can leave people in a horrible state, or lifted above the disaster - like the stars. When he is speaking of these end times Jesus says: *And then they will see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.* We have cause for great hope, at the

end of the world, or when we feel that our world is ending - Jesus is able to come in with power. And we are able to be protected by that power, able to see Jesus do things in our situation that can only happen by God's power, able to be lifted above the storm and shine like a star.

Daniel calls those who will shine "the wise." Well how can we be so wise so as to not need to worry about future tragic times? How can we be so wise as to share in the victory of Christ? Jesus tells us in the Gospel: *Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves you know that summer is near.* There are not only signs that tell the coming of the seasons, there are not only signs that may indicate the coming of the end times, there are signs that indicate how close we are to God. Staying close to God allows us to share in the effects of that great sacrifice of Christ - the sacrifice that we hear of in the second reading: *For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated.* We are a people made holy through our Baptism, and consecrated by our participation in the sacrifice of Jesus made present in the Eucharist. So many things in life, so many doctrines and trends in the world try to pull us away from Jesus, we have to be aware of the signs that this is happening.

Sometimes we can see on our own and are aware of it, sometimes we need the help of others to help us to see, we can miss it. We could so slowly be absorbing the secular messages of the world that we don't realize it ourselves. Open conversations with holy people can help, reading and studying from good and solid sources can help us to see something we have missed, use of the sacrament of reconciliation (where you can lay out all that might be sinful to God in complete secrecy and receive council from the priest) - these can be ways that the Lord uses to get important feedback to us. On Friday I was reading a book on spirituality and God communicated to me something I was forgetting, and I had a great sense of peace in me as I realized it - Jesus comforted me in doubt - and knew what I had to do (I also knew that I couldn't do it without the help and power of Jesus). It is by how we turn to the Lord in hope and lean on him in difficult times that God brings us to a closer relationship.

Remember, God loves us and wants us to succeed in reaching that final rest - God also wants us to be able to find peace amid the difficulties of this present life. You don't need to be stressing about the end of the world, or the end of your world. Keep your eyes open and pay attention. Do not separate yourselves from Christ and then you will have reason to hope, not fear. If you stay connected to the Lord and what Jesus is saying, if you look in faith and hope for Jesus to make a difference - and peacefully apply what Jesus says to your life - you will be one of the wise ones who shine like the stars one day in a place far beyond the problems of the world.