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Did you ever have a piggy bank? I mean a real piggy bank, made of ceramic, with a coin slot in the top and just a small plug in the bottom that made it almost impossible to empty. If you saved your coins and had a real goal for the money inside, one day you would have to smash that piggy bank and it would all be over. Whatever was inside is all you had and you either had enough or you didn't. The piggy bank, like Humpty Dumpty, could not be put back together again.

Piggy banks are not human lives, nor are they near the value of our souls. But, the lesson of the piggy bank says a lot about the end of human life and what we have made of ourselves in this life when it is time to make an accounting of ourselves before God. We can no longer add to our good deeds, our lives of faith, or our openness to grace. We are either in the state of sanctifying grace or in the state of mortal sin.

The selections of Scripture chosen by the Church for these last weeks of the Liturgical Year are not for the faint-hearted: they are full of unsettling, apocalyptic images, hell-fire-and-damnation, next-time-no mister-nice-guy," that kind of talk. These kinds of passages, such as we have from the Book of Daniel and our last passage from the Gospel of Mark this Liturgical Year, can be difficult to hear and to handle, and for some people they can be just plain spooky.

If I were to ask for a show of hands, which I will not, asking how many of you have seen a movie they consider apocalyptic, most would not raise your hands. I would not raise mine. An internet search told me the top five apocalyptic movies over the last ten years were: 2012. Knowing, The Day After Tomorrow, The Andromeda Strain, and Terminator Salvation. A few more people may now raise their hands, and many of us would now be certain we have not seen an apocalyptic movie recently.

While we can choose to view or not view these movies, it is important to listen to these Scriptures and be reminded of at least two things these texts hold up to us.

The first is that there is a reminder in these selections that "Time has meaning." That is worth reflecting on in a cynical age like ours, when meaning of any kind is often the last thing anyone worries about. How you live your life, how you spend your time, how you invest your time, has significance. The very language we use shows us time has value. We "spend" time. We "invest" time. Time has meaning and value. Time is not just the seconds ticking away on the clock on a Sunday evening on "60 Minutes."

Time is holding hands; time is changing diapers; time is worshiping God; time is hard work for a just wage; time is opening the door for someone, anyone, any human - for all are created in the image and likeness of God; time is cheering on your favorite sports team; time is kneeling or sitting before the Lord in the Eucharist in Adoration; time is playing with your children; time is reading Scripture; time is praying with your family; time is serving others together in organizations such as the Knights of Columbus or other parish or service ministries; time is earthly and for you to spend and invest.

Time is precious. We hear the phrases in today's Scriptures, "a time unsurpassed in distress," "after that tribulation," "the Son of Man coming in the clouds," "know that the time is near." For our deceased relatives and friends, the first time has come; the final coming of the Lord at the end of time as we know it is yet to come. ***At this Saturday Vigil Mass, we remember the deceased members of the Knights of Columbus of our local Council. During the General Intercessions we will remember by name those who have served as Grand Knight as the Council celebrates its 60th anniversary.***

While the first reason it is important to listen to these Scriptures was to be reminded that time has meaning and is one of God's good gifts to be cherished and honored and respected, then the second is that so also then are the people, and the things, and the events of this life that populate our time. When God had finished the work of creation, God saw everything God had made and said, "tov". That is the Hebrew word for "good." God saw everything God had made and behold, it was very good.

That is our challenge. We are called to look not only at our time, but at how we spend and invest it with the people and things and events of this life that God has placed in the here and now of time. It is no accident that we were born in the 20th or 21st centuries. It is no accident that we have encountered people and circumstances that have allowed us to learn and to teach, to love and be loved, to touch and be touched in the ways we have experienced.

Through the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who once in time offered the one sacrifice described in our reading from the Letter to the Hebrews, we can transcend time in the Mass by sharing in that one perfect sacrifice that will heal our sins in this time. Two thousand years later, we, like the Hebrews await the coming of the Lord who offered that sacrifice. Two thousand years later, we like the Corinthians to whom Pope Clement I wrote, "Let us therefore strive to be found in the number of those that wait, so that we may share in the gifts God has promised," await the coming of the Lord who offered that sacrifice.

Some of us wait better than others. Today's Psalm refrain was, "You are my inheritance, O Lord." In this life, in this time, we know what it is like to wait on inheritance. But there is a difference between the Lord's inheritance and earthly inheritance. Nothing is promised in this life. God has promised us an inheritance.

This week know that you do not need to crack open a piggy bank. You do not need to worry about whether God will leave you an inheritance. Know that God has made time for your benefit and what you choose to do with your time makes a difference. God saw creation and it was very good. You are part of that creation. Time is part of that creation. May your choices and experiences be blessed this week.