

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community

33RD. ORDINARY SUNDAY

Cycle B - November 14, 2021

OPENING PRAYER



Leader: You are my inheritance, O Lord!

All: I set the Lord ever before me; with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Leader: Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices, my body, too, abides in confidence.

All: You will show me the path to life, fullness of joys in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever.

Leader: Let us invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Oh God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING [Daniel 12 (1-3)]

In those days, I Daniel, heard this word of the Lord:

"At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace. "But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever."

In the Bible there are several sections written in a different, peculiar language, which is called apocalyptic. Apocalyptic literature is born in times of difficulties and persecution, as a resource to strengthen the faith and hope of harassed believers. Visions and apparitions, cosmic signs, etc. are used in this type of literature. In all cases, behind the words whose symbolism can distract us, we must look for the background that is very simple: There is a fight between evil and good and although it seems that evil is going to triumph, it is close (and always! will happen!) the definitive victory of good.

This part of the book of Daniel was written at a time (between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC) full of difficulties for the Israelite as the Hellenistic rulers (Hellenist = pro-Greek) harassed them to leave their faith and dedicate themselves to the paganism. The author here refers to the archangel Michael [of which he already spoke in a previous passage: Dan 10:13] who fights for the people of God. This chapter 12 of the book of Daniel is the final part of it, and presents the closing of the story, a time of struggle and tribulation that will culminate in God's judgment of all mankind. The difference that there will be in that judgment between the good and the bad is clearly noticeable.

For the first time in the writing of the books of the Bible, the resurrection of the dead is mentioned. For those who were unjustly murdered because of their faith, it was the only logical prize for those who preferred to lose their lives, because still in that culture it was thought that everything ended when they died, that there was no life after this life. If we re-read the text, we will notice that God is not even mentioned. God is behind the curtain on the stage where the story unfolds. The believer, however, can discover that God is present in the tribulation (as meditated in today's psalm). The believer finds hope in a God who shows a mysterious presence behind the events.

- (1) Read Wisdom 3 (1-10) Reflect and comment
- (2) Read Psalm 68 (1-4) Reflect and comment
- (3) Read Revelation 3 (5). How do you understand this text after the previous readings?
- (4) Is the hope of the resurrection prize only for martyrs? Why?

SECOND READING [Hebrews 10 (11-14), (18)]

Brothers and sisters:

Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God; now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin.

For several weeks we have been reading in the second reading excerpts from the Letter to the Hebrews in which they highlight the dual role of Jesus Christ as ideal victim and perfect priest to carry out the only possible sacrifice to forgive humanity's sin and reconcile them with God. Today we read the last part of this chain of readings on the same topic. At first glance it says more or less the same. But this time there is an element that must be highlighted: posture. At the beginning we read that the temple priests offered the standing sacrifice. And later we are told that Jesus Christ sat down.

This simple difference speaks volumes. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was made one and only time, as we reflected last week. This being the case, he no longer needs to stand, and he sits on the throne ... because in addition to being a priest-intercessor he can judge.

Some atheist may go so far as to say that the Church is a school for the guilty. And they are not without reason because that is the image that we sometimes display. At some point in our history the discourse of the unworthiness of believers was installed in the Church. That we must beg for forgiveness, when it is offered free by the Lord, thanks to his saving action. Christ is no longer standing before God interceding for our sins. Forgiveness has been obtained once and for all and for all sins. And God testifies to us that after Christ's death he no longer remembers our sins. The Lord himself is in charge of introducing us to inner religion, founded on filial trust, and not on fear. We must not regard our miseries as an unrelenting burden. A Christian does not believe in sin, but in Christ's victory over sin.

- (1) What kind of religious formation did you receive, the one that makes you feel guilty, or the one that fills you with hope?
- (2) What can we do in our immediate circle (family, friends) to awaken faith based on triumph over evil and sin?

GOSPEL [Mark 13 (24-33)]

Jesus said to his disciples:

"In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, 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, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

"Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates.

Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Do not be disturbed by the language used, but put your mind on the message it wants to convey. An intelligent Christian will not understand this text at face value. There are the unintelligent ones who recreate themselves with false interpretations based on the written words and not on the transmitted message. Fortunately we have the Magisterium of the Church, which helps us to fully interpret the biblical texts.

Beyond the language of images, the elements to be recognized are: (1) the triumph of the Son of Man, which will be visible to all; (2) it will be unexpected; (3) the gathering of all the elect of the great family of God.

The message certainly points to the future. But in a different way, because it does so by relying on the present. It is not about looking to the future to forget the difficulties of the present life, or to ignore the efforts of personal sanctification that we have to make in the here and now. The Christians must live in the present preparing for the

future. They must learn to see the signs that guide them about the future life in the present. But above all, they emphasize that the true protagonist of the story is not man, but God.

The return of Jesus Christ in power and majesty does not mean that God abandons the way of love to replace it with one of force. If so, the cross would be meaningless, and those who say that love is useless and that only force is effective would be right. But we know that this is not the case, and the coming of Christ that we await is the best demonstration that love is victorious and powerful.

(1) Read Isaiah 13 (9-10) What differences do you find with the message of Christ?

(2) Read Joel 2 (10-11) Reflect and share

(3) Read Joel 2 (12-14) and 12 (18-19) Reflect and share.

(4) What do these readings produce for you? Fear? Confusion? Hope?

(5) Would you like to know "the day and the hour"? Would it be good or not?

(6) Most of the time for there to be a transformation you have to go through pain. Have you experienced a painful situation that produced a transformation in you?

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees can propose their own needs of prayer)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we meet, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father ...**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

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