

Dear Members of Sacred Heart Church,

At our Parish Memorial Mass this past Monday, I shared a beautiful quote with the congregation gathered there from C.S. Lewis: “When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive.” At the Prayer of the Faithful, a very long list of names of parishioners and loved ones of parishioners was read in loving memory and heartfelt gratitude. In the period of silence that followed, I remembered my own departed loved ones beginning with my Father and Mother, my Brother and Sister followed by grandparents, godparents, relatives, friends, classmates, mentors, parishioners and yes, even beloved pets. You could hear the sniffles, see the tears and touch the grief of those who were present but you could also hear the faith in the singing, feel the trust in the praying and grasp the peace that was passed in the sharing of Holy Communion. Together we sang a psalm of hope:

“I believe, I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land, in the land of the living.”

Today’s Gospel begins with an ending – tribulation, the darkening of the sun and moon, the stars falling from the heavens that will be shaken. The First Reading ends with a beginning – the wise shining brightly like the stars forever. After a time of immense distress when all seems lost and gone, Jesus calls us to pay attention to the signs all around us that reveal a new season has begun, not of summer but of salvation drawing near as the Son of Man comes in glory and power, “Gathering his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.”

The grieving who gathered together Monday to remember their loved ones also gathered with the ones they love to be comforted, reassured, and lifted up to the beginning beyond the ending that is promised to us.

“I know that I shall one day see the goodness of the Lord,  
when God will wipe away our tears, and death will be no more.  
I know that my Redeemer lives, that I shall rise again.”

Let us remember and give thanks,

*Father John*