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Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time (year B)

November 14, 2021

GATHERING TIME (10 – 15 Minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

The final weeks of the liturgical year point to ‘doom and gloom’ readings, referring to **the end of the World**. They are consistently ‘bad news’. They can inspire fear and hopelessness. The end times easily capture the attention of many people, as there is more ‘unknown’ than ‘known,’ which can fuel the imagination. The imagery of Matthew 24:7 is one such example: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places... false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect”.

In today’s gospel, “there will be a time of suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in the clouds’.

Many of us have witnessed these ‘**omens**’ in our lifetimes: World War II, the Holocaust, tsunamis, tornadoes, towns and miles of forests destroyed by wild fires, pandemics, warming climate, etc.

All will come to an end. Ash Wednesday reminds us of this, “Remember, you are dust, and unto dust you will return!”

The end of **our** world here on earth ends at **our** last breath; however, my spiritual world, my life with Christ and my friends, will continue at the heavenly banquet of the Lord’s table for ever, and ever, and ever, and.....in peace and joy.

Without God, without Christ, “Everything, is dust in the wind!” There is an awesome song by **Kansas** called “**Dust in the wind!**” I used it when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday at the high school. You can Google it and enjoy it.

Jordan Peterson, a noted clinical psychologist, notes: The **collapse** of our Judeo-Christian values is a greater threat than climate change.

Warm-up Activity (*about 8 – 10 Minutes*)

When I reflect on this **past** liturgical year that is coming to an end, do I see doom and gloom, or do I see grace and blessing?

Were some of my **hopes** fulfilled in my life? In the life of my family? My community? My Church?

What hopes do I have for this **new** liturgical year in my life? In the life of my family? My community? My Church?

The Table of the Word

In the last ten years, there have been thirteen international newsworthy predictions about the end of the world that gained attention. Some predicted natural disasters—asteroids, earthquakes and fire—while others spoke of financial collapse, invasion by aliens, and the arrival of The Rapture. Presently there is a meteorite heading close to earth in 16 years. In the recent news they are sending a rocket to smash into another meteorite to see if it can be set off its course. This will prepare them for how to deal with the meteorite heading towards earth now. A few years ago, there was a doomsday prediction going back to the ancient Mayans, that said that on December 20, 2012 the world would end. There have been many other such predictions, some of them resulting in such things as selling off of all goods and properties, seclusion from society, and even mass suicides. There seems to be a continual fascination about such doom and gloom messages in our society.

Penitential Rite:

In the face of these ‘doom and gloom’ messages, and realities, we need an introduction of **hope**. Jesus Christ is the source of our hope. His resurrection from the dead—the impossible and the improbable brought about through the power of God—is the sign to us **that hope and new life** will win out, over fear and hopelessness.

Lord Jesus, help us to recognize the signs of hope and new life around us.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, make us instruments of hope and new life.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, renew in us our desire to work for the resurrection of society.
Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
we turn to you with hope
as we reflect on the realities of our lives,
and the ending of another liturgical year.
Help us to always **recognize your presence** among us,
and the grace that you give us to overcome
any and all struggles, difficulties and trials
that come our way.
May your light always shine upon us,
and enlighten our path.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
whose resurrection from the dead gives us eternal hope,
and opens us to the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
now and forever.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME

FIRST READING: Daniel 12:1-3

At that time, Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

Every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,” and since then he has been waiting, “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.” For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Where there is forgiveness of sin and lawless deeds, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-32

A reading from the Holy gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus spoke to his disciples about the end of the world which is to come: In those days, right after the time of suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. “Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in the clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the Angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. “Truly I tell 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 about that day or hour no one knows, neither the Angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Pause for a brief reflection on the scripture readings.

COMMENTARY:

We find the battle between good and evil **throughout** Sacred Scripture. In today's **reading from the prophet Daniel**, we hear of the victory of good over evil. **Michael the Archangel** is the protector of the people. Suffering has ended, and “those who sleep in the **dust** of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some, to shame and everlasting contempt.” Here we have one of the **earliest** statements in the Old Testament about **the resurrection** of the dead from the “dust” of the earth, to rise, shining like the stars, and the resurrection of those who are condemned.

The righteous now live with God in peace and success, with grace and blessing. The prophet introduces the image of light, that “everyone who has been wise will shine as brightly as the sky above, and everyone who has led others to please God, will shine like the stars.” The righteous, the faithful, will share in the light and life of God, and all darkness will disappear.

In the **Second Reading from Hebrews**, the Old Testament priests offered sacrifices time and time again, all foreshadowing **the single perfect sacrifice** of Jesus on the **altar** of the Cross, the perfect Priest, offering up the perfect Victim, the perfect Lamb, Jesus Himself. This is the awesome event we celebrate at each Mass. This proclaims the victory over evil through the death and resurrection of Jesus. His sacrifice on the cross is once and forever, and we share in that victory through our baptism. By our Baptism into Christ, we are all priests, male and female. We are also prophets and kings. We are part of a new creation in Christ.

The **gospels** at this time of year are also dramatic in their imagery. First come the images of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem that will come, and then the glory of Jesus will

be revealed, His coming in “power and glory”. The gospel then introduces images of new life, using the image of the fig tree, as the risen Christ restores our hope. This new life, though, is under God’s control, not ours. It remains mysterious in its nature and in its timing, but the reality that awaits us with the Lord, is no mystery. As we belong to Him, He draws us to Himself, and we will share in His **eternal life**. We will share in the **heavenly feast** at the table of the Lord. Eternal hope will be ours.

Allow 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Scriptures and Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. “*... will shine like the stars*” (Daniel 12:1-3)

Light is an attractive symbol in art, and literature (including Scripture). God is the source of light, and overcomes the darkness of sin and death.

- a) How have you experienced the light of Christ in your life?
- b) How do you “shine like the stars”?

2. “*Christ offered himself as a sacrifice that is good forever*” (Hebrews 10:11-14, 18)

Jesus Christ is the source of our **hope**. His death and resurrection, His **perfect**, eternal sacrifice—has won for us new life.

- a) How do you identify yourself as a person of hope?
- b) How has hope lifted you up and set you free?
- c) How have you brought hope to others?

3. “*The sky and the earth will not last forever, but my words will*” (Mark 13:24-32)

Despite the doom and gloom of the gospel, the victory of Christ is proclaimed in His power and glory.

- a) How do we react to hopelessness when we are confronted by it?
- b) How have we experienced hope?

CARING - PRAYING TIME: (15 – 20 minutes)

1. **Word for the Week:** “**shine like the stars**”

2. **Suggestions for the Week:**

A new liturgical year is almost upon us—a new beginning. This week, reflect on that new beginning, and what are your hopes for your spiritual journey in the upcoming year. ‘Celebrating the Word’ will be a part of that journey. Reflect on how you can and will “shine like the stars” in this new liturgical year. Your faith has renewed you and given you hope among many, who have not shared in that hope that comes from knowing the risen Christ, and sharing in His victory over sin and death.

3. Intercessions:

With secure hope, we turn to the Lord in prayer:

1. That the Lord will bless our new liturgical year, as we journey with the risen Lord, we pray to the Lord ...**Lord, hear us**
2. That hope will shine in our hearts and minds, helping us to lead others from darkness to the light of Christ, we pray to the Lord ...**Lord, hear us**
3. That our victory over evil and sin, through Christ, will allow us to share more deeply in the life of Christ, and to share that life with others, we pray to the Lord ...**Lord, hear us**
4. That discouraging and troubling results of the COVID-19 pandemic will not draw us away from Christ, but help us to draw closer to Him in love and trust, we pray to the Lord ... **Lord, hear us**
5. That we will remain open to the opportunities for grace and blessing that the Lord gives us, we pray to the Lord ...**Lord, hear us**

And how can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray:

Lord of light and hope,
shine on us with your grace,
as we often find ourselves surrounded by the darkness of sin and evil.

You are the source of all light,
and your risen Son shares His light and hope with us.
May we be faithful messengers of your light and hope,
bringing your new life and salvation to all.
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in union with the Holy Spirit,
now and forever.

Amen.

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favours on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray as one, OUR FATHER ...

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (Celebrating the Word was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R. deceased 2012). **website:** www.resurrectionists.ca **Email:** provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA).