

November 13, 1994

Daniel 12:1-3

In the third year of King Cyrus a word was revealed to Daniel. The word was true and it concerned a great conflict. "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.

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 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. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds," he also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Mark 13:24-32

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple and began to talk to his disciples about the end which is to come.

"In those days, 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 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.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What have leaders of the oppressed sacrificed "to lead the many to justice?" Think perhaps of Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Oscar Romero and others.
2. Compare the sacrifices of Biblical and modern-day leaders to Christ's sacrifice. How are they the same? How are they different?
3. Mark describes the end of the world and the coming of the Lord in apocalyptic language. What lesson would he impart to all readers?

Marilyn Mutti

Christ will reign in triumph

THE GOOD NEWS

GOD'S WORD IN EVERYDAY LIVING



By Father Paul Turner

THE GUNFIGHT at the O.K. Corral lives in our history as an event of sheer terror. But it reads like a Barney episode next to today's Gospel (Mark 13:24-32). Jesus' frightening vision of the end of the world has us staring down the barrel of a gun.

For starters, if you've been a good faithful disciple, you can expect suffering, persecution, torture and death. For starters.

Then the sun will burn out, the moon will darken, and the stars will fall from heaven. Jupiter was just an appetizer.

Finally, Jesus will come in all his glory, bringing much needed relief. Powerful over all creation, he will dispatch angels to the ends of the earth to find the faithful disciples who may still be languishing in exile, and return them for the most talked-about reunion in history.

The drama of this passage has caused many Bible readers to quake in fear and to seek the cosmic signs which will help them prepare for the literal cataclysm herein predicted.

To add to the impact, Jesus draws from several Old Testament sources. Isaiah 13:10 predicts a day when the stars, the sun, and the moon will not give light. Isaiah 34:4 says the skies will roll up like a scroll. In Ezekiel 32:7-8 God threatens to cover the heavens and darken all their shining lights. And Joel predicts more of the same in 2:10 and 3:15 (4:15 in some Bibles), with the moon turning to

blood in 2:31. Graphic stuff. Hiding under the bed yet?

The happy side of Jesus' speech, the prediction of his return, he also draws from an Old Testament reference. He quotes from Daniel 7:13-14 a vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, who rules over everyone, and whose reign lasts forever.

What we get here from Jesus, then, is not so much a new prediction, but the recitation of some old ones. What is new is that he applies them to his own upcoming death, and to the experience of his listeners. "This generation will not pass away," he says, "until all these things have taken place."

Fearsome as this prediction is, one can't help but notice that today, long after that generation did pass away, the sun still shines quite merrily, the moon still beguiles lovers, and the stars enchant campers the world over, wherever pollution is kept at bay.

DID JESUS MISS? After all, he admits that only the Father really knows about that day -- not the angels, and not even he the Son.

Rather, his prediction might be a clue to us that he is speaking figuratively about the persecution the early Church would endure. The martyrdoms of the first Christians were every bit as horrifying as anything in this passage -- lions, swords, clubs, crucifixions, all contributed to a river of early Christian blood. Not a darkened sky, maybe, but no less cataclysmic.

This passage offers hope in the realization that Christ will reign in triumph over whatever may befall us. Many are the fears which keep us locked up in the house, which reroute our cars at night in the city, which prevent us from visiting the dentist, and from opening this month's bills. Jesus instills the greatest of fears only to provide the greatest of calms, the Son of Man will reign forever.

Father Paul Turner is pastor of St. John Francis Regis Parish, Kansas City.

Daily Scripture Readings

Thirty-Second Sunday In Ordinary Time Sunday, November 6 1 Kings 17:10-16 Psalms 146:7-10 Hebrews 9:24-28 Mark 12:38-44

Monday, November 7 Timothy 1:1-9 Psalms 24:1-6 Luke 17:1-6

Tuesday, November 8 Timothy 2:1-8, 11-14 Psalms 37:3-4, 18, 23, 27, 29 Luke 17:7-10

Wednesday, November 9 Isaiah 56:1, 6-7 Psalms 84:3-6, 8, 11 Luke 17:21-24

Thursday, November 10 Philomen 7:20 Psalms 146:7-10 Luke 17:20-25

Friday, November 11 2 John 4-9 Psalms 119:1-2, 10-11, 17-18 Luke 17:26-37

Saturday, November 12 3 John 6-8 Psalms 112:1-6 Luke 18:1-8

Thirty-Third Sunday In Ordinary Time Sunday, November 13 Daniel 12:1-3 Psalms 136: 6-11 Hebrews 10:11-14, 18 Mark 13:24-32

