

Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time November 18, 2012 Year B

The liturgical year is winding down and you can hear it in the readings; their tone has changed. In the reading from the Book of Daniel, it speaks of "a time unsurpassed in distress."

In the Letter to the Hebrews, Jesus, the high priest, is waiting until "his enemies are made his footstool."

And Mark's Gospel tells us that the Son of Man's return will be preceded by days of tribulation when, "the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will be falling from the sky and the power in the heavens will be shaken" (Mark).

At first glance these readings may sound ominous and fill our minds and hearts with fear.

Fear---because we are told that the celestial order and established human institutions will collapse.

The days of **"tribulation"** have predictions of a painful period with dire consequences. Hard and shattering times are coming.

If we take these warnings to heart, then we might want to make some changes in our lives, while there is time.

It sometimes takes powerful imagery and strong language to shake us up enough to get us to make necessary changes in the daily pattern of our lives.

While we may not live to see the grand ending and return of Jesus in glory, as these readings foretell, nevertheless, they do remind us that our life has limits.

We do need to evaluate where we have made investments of our time and efforts.

Yes the readings are sobering. They do mean to shake us out of our complacency and from misplaced confidence in material matters.

They should give us pause to reflect is everything in order?  
Are our energies expended for what will last,

or are we frittering away our time on what "rust or moth will consume?"

Modern life has much that preoccupies us and keeps us from examining the course of our lives and the future consequences of our present actions.

The scriptures remind us that if we are living totally in the present moment, without considering the long-term meaning of our lives, then only disappointment and maybe even despair await us.

However the readings also ring with loud sounds of hope.  
They say things will not always be the way they are now.

The evils of the world, and those who thrive on the backs of the vulnerable, will not, in the end, succeed.

God has an eye for "the elect" and when the "Son of Man" returns, He will gather them.

He will gather them—like a shepherd. And it will be the Good Shepherd, not wanting to lose any of His beloved sheep, who is coming to fulfill his promise.

These readings reveal God's purpose and final plan for us and the world.

War will not have the last word. Poverty will not raise a final triumphant fist.

Discrimination will not, after all is said and done, dance in victory.

Oppression, in all its hideous guises, will not have a lasting foothold over the vulnerable. Perpetrators of evil will not prevail.

But we have a role to play in God's designs. The vision we hear in God's word today involves our participation.

That is clear throughout the Scriptures.

God chose prophets to call people back to just living and the cause of righteousness.

Jesus did the same when he called disciples to go out to announce the kingdom of God.

To heal people's hurts and reconcile enemies.

And today, Jesus is calling us as His prophets of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Prophets, whether young or old, to help bring about and move along the end of the world.

Prophets who work for peace and justice.

Prophets who help others know that they are loved by God and they too have a noble purpose in life.

Prophets who do what they can to help those who are the most neglected, the homeless, the depressed, the lonely, the unborn, and those in prison.

I will close with a quote from my favorite philosopher, Yogi Berra. He wisely said, “It’s not over until it’s over.”

And it’s true.

We do have a long way to go before we bring about God’s reign on earth. But we will keep moving forward to the end.

Not because we are afraid, but because we are convinced that Christ Our Hope will be with us to bring about a great ending.

For, you have heard it said, “All is well that ends well.