

Sunday Homily
33rd Sunday Ordinary Time B
Dn 12:1-3; Heb 10:11-14, 18; Mk 13:24-32
November 15, 2009

By Deacon Jeff Claar

As we come to the close of Ordinary Time in our liturgical year, the Church gives us three scripture readings that focus on the End Times. The End Times speak to the return of Christ in all His glory. "He will come to judge the living and the dead".

Quite often when I am preparing a homily I will ask those around me for their thoughts or ideas on what they would like to hear. When I asked "what would you like to know about the End Times?", the two responses I got this time were: "that stuff freaks me out", and "oh, the end times...I always like it when I learn something about what the Church teaches"; I guess I will go with the second one today!

But really if you think about it, we can easily be "freaked out" because it is the Great Unknown. We like to control our lives and destinies, or at least believe that we can control them. We love this illusion of control. But when we are confronted with death, or the idea of the End Times, this illusion is shattered; we realize quite starkly that we do not control the timing of our ultimate destiny. The Good News today is that although we cannot control the timing, we can control our place in eternity, and as always we simply have to listen to Jesus to know the way.

We hear in Mark's gospel exactly what Jesus taught about the End Times: "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, *nor the Son, but only the Father.*" Even Jesus doesn't know! only the Father.

Society loves to read all kinds of things into all kinds of things and it is easy to get caught up in the latest movie or book. So, what do we know for sure? We can never go wrong when we follow what the Church teaches us. Let's look at our book, the Catechism. What does the Catholic Church teach us about the end of the world? We know:

1. Jesus will return to the earth in a glorious triumph that is universally visible and undeniable-not invisible and secret.
2. First, however, the Antichrist will appear to deceive the world and persecute the Church.
3. The Church will suffer the great tribulation prophesied by her Lord.

4. The final victory of Christ on earth will not come through a gradual improvement in the world's spiritual condition, nor by a special period of his earthly reign before judgment day. It will take place not within history, but beyond it, after Christ has brought an end to history by His glorious second coming.
5. The Jewish people will come to recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah before He returns.
6. The dead will be raised.
7. Christ will judge the living and the dead, and the Devil and his allies will at last be utterly overthrown.
8. At the end of time, God's kingdom will come in its fullness, and all things will be renewed. Not only humanity, but the entire universe as well will be perfected. In this sin, pain or sickness, death or decay. The saints will reign with Christ, glorified in body and soul, and will enjoy perfect fellowship face to face with God for eternity.
9. The hope of God's coming kingdom should not tempt us to withdraw from earthly affairs.
10. In the meantime, Christ's presence with us through His Word, His Sacraments, and His Spirit draw us closer to the fulfillment of His promise.

We can be confident that Christ will always meet all our needs through the guidance of our Holy Mother Church.