

My Dear People of God,

Next Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King which concludes the liturgical year. With the end in view, the readings of this Sunday invite us to focus and reflect on the end times. The events that will usher in and will take place in the end time are described in apocalyptic terms (i.e. describing complete end of the world).

In the first reading, we have the vision of the prophet Daniel concerning the end of time or the end of the world. This reading is very significant because in it we find the earliest statement about and assurance of the resurrection of the dead. It is here that we find the first mention in the Bible of the reality of 'everlasting life' (*life/live for ever*). The apocalyptic scene described in this reading is part of the revelation granted to the prophet Daniel and it depicts the final struggle of human beings at the end of time. ***"..it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time....those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace."***

It is evident in this reading that death is described as sleeping in the dust of the earth and the resurrection is described as awakening. After they have been awakened or raised, the dead must then give an account of the record of their deeds when they lived. This then is the basis upon which they are separated, some rewarded with everlasting life and others punished with horror and disgrace. This vision is a message both of hope and a challenge to all those who are alive. It is a message of HOPE because it gives an assurance of life that never ends after death. It is a CHALLENGE because the life that never ends comes after judgement and the judgment is based on.

In the gospel reading, the character and appearance of the end of time is presented by means of allusions to Old Testament apocalyptic traditions like the one by the prophet Daniel. Most prominent is the reference to the tribulations that precede the coming of the new age and the Son of Man in the clouds. Cosmic occurrences will accompany the distress that will take hold of the world, indicating that all of creation shall be thrown into a recreating disarray, akin to the one of the floods in Genesis (Gen 7:17-24). All this to prepare for a new world order.

The gospel further points out and asserts that the precise time of the end is known only to God. This is a very important point for us believers, so that we may not allow ourselves to be misled by claims or speculations that the end is near. All we have to do is to maintain a constant watchfulness so as to be found ready. The purpose of the Lord's glorious coming is not so much execute judgment but to gather the elect. ***"And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky."***

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, the ultimate and most important message in all this is that **Good will Triumph** (*Good will Win over evil*). The fact that good always triumphs over evil serves to encourage us to remain faithful in our pursuit of the good, especially when there seem to be no fruits and evil appears to win. In the ultimate end good triumphs!

Our disposition in this journey should be like that of the Psalmist in our responsorial psalm of today. It is a disposition marked by a strong relationship with God. When we have a strong relationship, then we need not fear and like the psalmist we should say: ***“O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup, you it is who hold fast my lot. I set the LORD ever before me; with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices, my body, too, abides in confidence; because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption. You will show me the path to life, fullness of joys in your presence, the delights at your right hand forever.”***

God bless

Fr. Simon Peter