

- As you know, our Church's liturgy goes through a yearly cycle echoing the life Jesus: beginning with His *Advent* and birth (Advent begins the Sunday after Thanksgiving this year)...a little Ordinary Time, representing Jesus' life before He begins His mission...then Lent, reflecting Jesus' time of preaching and teaching...then Holy Week with His passion and death...Easter celebrating the Resurrection...then the Ascension and Pentecost—the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church...
- ...then Ordinary Time, reflecting the time of growth of the faith and the Church... coming to a close the final coming of Christ and the judgment of all peoples—which we celebrate next weekend with the feast of Christ the King.
- And as the Church approaches the end of her liturgical year, she does so with lessons that remind us of the inevitability of death, judgment, and eventual resurrection...as we hear that from the prophet Daniel today, as well as from Jesus.
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- Now the book of Daniel named for its principal character, who lived in the last years of the Babylonian exile in the 500s BC, in what is current-day Iraq.
- The book of Daniel, however, was probably written about 200-150 BC, when Israel was under Greek rule, having been conquered by Alexander the Great in the 300s BC.
- ...and at that time, the Jews being persecuted by the Greek king, who was trying to force his subjects to abandon their traditions and adopt Greek ways.
- The Jews faithful to the Law of God were killed...books of the Law destroyed.
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- And so the author wrote the book of Daniel to rally the Jews to remain faithful to God despite this persecution...reminding us of the mastery of God over all times and nations.

- For God directs history toward the ultimate establishment of His all-encompassing and eternal kingdom—though we do not see the whole plan.
- Like a raw diamond being cut, ground and polished toward a goal which it could not fathom IF it could fathom... creation, too, is undergoing the cutting and grinding and polishing which WE cannot always understand.
- It is in the book of Daniel that we see the first clear writing about the end of the world and the resurrection...and so Daniel is one of the last links in preparation of the world for the coming of Christ.
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- We read today: “*Your people shall escape*” meaning God’s faithful ones “...*everyone who is found written in the book*” ...meaning those who have been faithful to God and thus found worthy of salvation.
- The book of Revelation continues theme: “*I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and...[a] book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. (Rev 20:12 RSV) ... “...if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:15 RSV)...for “... nothing unclean shall enter [Heaven], nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Rev 21:27 RSV)*
- Thus, we are not to presume on salvation. Jesus tells us: “*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven...*” (Mat 7:21 RSV)...and St. Paul tells us: “...*whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*” (Gal 6:7-9 RSV)

- Just as if we desire forgiveness, we must forgive. Just as we desire mercy, we must first be merciful. To be with the eternal Good forever, we must seek the good here and now.
  - My favorite quote from the Book of Sirach: “Before man are life and death; he is given whichever he chooses.” (15:17).
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  - God tells us these things through the scriptures, not to terrify or to cause despair, but rather to rally US to be faithful and live our faith consistently, unashamedly and with utmost determination...and to give warning to those who do evil so that they will repent.
  - ...because, as St. Paul assures us, God “...*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” (1Tim 2:4).
  - We are given our lives and our blessings not to serve ourselves, but rather to serve God and those in need.
  - St. Paul again: “...*we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” (Eph 2:10 RSV)
  - But our repentance and subsequent fidelity is key. As Jesus so pointedly reminds us today in the Gospel, no one knows the day nor the hour in which he will be standing before the throne—to be judged by what we have done.
  - Yes, we are approaching the Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, but God’s mercy is always bound to repentance...turning away from the bad and toward the Good...and thus toward Him.
  - This is the message of all the prophets...of John the Baptist...of the apostles...and of Jesus Himself.
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- Now Satan tries to deceive us like he deceived Eve—by telling us there is some way to happiness apart from God.
  - But there is not...because we find our happiness in love, and God IS love...and therefore our happiness.

- And that is why we turn toward Christ upon the cross...Christ in the Mass...because the crucifix is the eternal image and proof of God's tremendous love for us.
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- The last words of the Bible are "*Marana tha!*"... "*Come, Lord Jesus!*"...for His coming is our hope and is meant to be a time of our unmitigated joy, not a moment to dread.
- When we imagine, and when we see, Christ coming in glory, our reaction ought to be a resounding "YES!"
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- We have only one life on earth...and as we saw in Paris Friday, our time can come without a hint or a whisper of warning.
- So let us examine our lives and rid ourselves of anything that might interfere with the hope and joy that we anticipate.
- Loving God and loving each other—that is the path to eternal life...to having our names written in the Book of Life.
- Our map to God is in the scriptures and in the teaching of the Church, given to us in His love. God's laws are not imposed on us as restrictions and burdens...but as sure direction to guide us safely home.
- So let us spend our years well and according to the good, repeating in our mind's ear unceasingly "service, service"...to God, and to neighbor...that we may hear as we arrive at the throne of God from Christ the King: "*Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...*" (Mat 25:34 RSV)

Reading 1

[Dn 12:1-3](#)

In those days, I Daniel,  
heard this word of the Lord:  
"At that time there shall arise  
Michael, the great prince,  
guardian of your people;  
it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress  
since nations began until that time.  
At that time your people shall escape,  
everyone who is found written in the book.

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake;  
some shall live forever,  
others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

"But the wise shall shine brightly  
like the splendor of the firmament,  
and those who lead the many to justice  
shall be like the stars forever."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11](#)

**R. (1) You are my inheritance, O Lord!**  
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.  
**R. You are my inheritance, O Lord!**  
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.  
**R. You are my inheritance, O Lord!**  
You will show me the path to life,  
fullness of joys in your presence,  
the delights at your right hand forever.  
**R. You are my inheritance, O Lord!**

Reading II

[Heb 10:11-14, 18](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Every priest stands daily at his ministry,  
offering frequently those same sacrifices  
that can never take away sins.

But this one offered one sacrifice for sins,  
and took his seat forever at the right hand of God;  
now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool.  
For by one offering  
he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated.

Where there is forgiveness of these,  
there is no longer offering for sin.

Gospel

[Mk 13:24-32](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"In those days after that tribulation  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from the sky,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

"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.

"Learn a lesson from the fig tree.  
When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves,  
you know that summer is near.  
In the same way, when you see these things happening,  
know that he is near, at the gates.  
Amen, I say to 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 of that day or hour, no one knows,  
neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."