

- In preparation for the great and final Sunday of the liturgical year next weekend—Christ the King—today the Church gives us readings reminding us of the approach of that great day, and that we should always live our lives prepared for it...for when it will arrive, no one knows.
- Yet it is not something to dread, but to look forward to... because that is the fulfilment of God’s plan for us...a plan which is meant for our ultimate good and eternal contentment...
- ...when, as we hear in the book of Revelation speaking of that time: *“Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”* (Rev 21:3-4 RSV)
- But...we have to live our lives, make our decisions, exercise charity, be faithful to God in all things...as if that time will be before the end of the day...because someday, that’s exactly how it will come.
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- A good preparation exercise is to imagine this: If you knew absolutely that Christ was going to come in 1 hour, what would be your reaction? Joy, as it should be...or fear?
- Jesus might say to you: “How many times did Fr. John...Fr. Glenn...all the priests and deacons throughout your life...and even myself in the Gospels...told you to be prepared...that this would happen?”
- As He tells us through the prophet Jeremiah: *“...[you] did not heed my words, says the LORD, which I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen...”* (Jeremiah 29:19 RSV) Will that be the predicament in which we find ourselves...and yet, so unnecessarily.

2016

- The Catechism tells us quite ominously: “[Mortal sin] *results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness [in confession], it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back.*” (CCC 1861)
- “*There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to...eternal loss.*” (CCC 1864)
- So...on that day, will you be in an panic to find a priest to hear your confession?...sick with fear, remembering mortal sins unconfessed. It will then be too late.
- Or would you be filled with exuberant joy...free from mortal sin and finally going home to Heaven, to Our Lord and to our Heavenly Father?
- And we should lose no time in our preparation. I've lost count of the people I've buried who had no time whatever to prepare—young, middle-aged, old...it makes no difference.
- An accident, a heart attack, aneurism...and gone. One moment here, the next moment facing the judgment seat of God.
- Even those in old age always think they'll have yet one more day...until they don't.
- Jesus tells us of His coming: “*As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man... Watch therefore, for you do*

- not know on what day your Lord is coming.*” (Mat 24:36-42 RSV)
- And whether it is by Christ’s 2nd coming or by death, the outcome is the same: we go to the judgment seat of God.
 - And I don’t give you this today to frighten, but simply just to remind us of a reality....that all the material things we slave for all our lives are useless trinkets...prettier boxes to be seen driving...pretty boxes to live in.
 - But Jesus tells us today: *“All that you see here—the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*
 - If that is so about the Temple in Jerusalem—the truth of which we easily witness—how much more so with the temples we build in our own lives...all those material things we consider so important. There is no “cloud storage”.
 - And yet we so overlook that most obvious truth that Jesus reminds us of: *“What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world yet lose his life?”* (cf. Lk 9:25)
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 - And yet...fear of either—death, or of Christ’s coming—is so very unnecessary! We can have no angst at all about either if we simply live the good as given us by God—none of which is burdensome, as St. John tells us...and then watching for Christ’s coming then becomes a source of nothing else but joyful expectation.
 - The only “burden” is denying the excessive desires of our pride and our senses, of being charitable, and recognizing that all that God gives us is for our eternal good.
 - For as St. Paul reminds us so poignantly: *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?”* (Romans 8:32 RSV)

- So...as Jesus says: *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me...”* (Lk 9:23ff)—for, as we all know, self-discipline and denial of our sense desires can be quite difficult...and yet Our Lord strengthens and assures us: *“But he who endures to the end will be saved.”* (Matthew 10:22)
- So...*“You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you. Only to do right, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”* (Micah 6:8)

Reading 1 Mal 3:19-20a

Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven,
when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble,
and the day that is coming will set them on fire,
leaving them neither root nor branch,
says the LORD of hosts.

But for you who fear my name, there will arise
the sun of justice with its healing rays.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

R. (cf. 9) **The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.**

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Let the sea and what fills it resound,
the world and those who dwell in it; **[All creation will rejoice]**
let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains shout with them for joy.

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to rule the earth,

**He will rule the world with justice
and the peoples with equity.**

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Reading II 2 Thes 3:7-12

Brothers and sisters:

You know how one must imitate us.

For **we did not act in a disorderly way** among you,
nor did we eat food received free from anyone.

On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day
we worked, so as not to burden any of you.

Not that we do not have the right.

Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as **a model for you**,
so that you might imitate us.

In fact, when we were with you,
we instructed you that **if anyone was unwilling to work,**
neither should that one eat.

We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a
disorderly way,

by not keeping busy but minding the business of others.
Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly
and to eat their own food.

Gospel Lk 21:5-19

While some people were speaking about
how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings,
Jesus said, "All that you see here--
the days will come when there will not be left
a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Then they asked him,
"Teacher, when will this happen?
And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?"
He answered,
"See that you not be deceived,
for many will come in my name, saying,
'I am he,' and 'The time has come.'
Do not follow them!
When you hear of wars and insurrections,
do not be terrified; for such things must happen first,
but it will not immediately be the end."
Then he said to them,
"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues
from place to place;
and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.

"Before all this happens, however,
they will seize and persecute you, [*"the same as they did me"*]
they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons,
and they will have you led before kings and governors
because of my name.

It will lead to your giving testimony.
Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand,
for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking
that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.
You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends,
and they will put some of you to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name,
but not a hair on your head will be destroyed.
By your perseverance you will secure your lives."