



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Father, may Your will be done. Help us to remember that we have a place in Your Kingdom, where You live and reign, together with your Son and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Daniel 12:1-3

The Book of Daniel is what is commonly known as apocalyptic literature. This literature focuses on the end times. As we approach the end of our Church year, two weeks before Advent, we are reminded that the world in which we live has an end. It won't last forever.

As is the case with most apocalyptic writings, Daniel presents the two ends of the spectrum for humanity at the end of days. He says, "Some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace."

Apocalyptic literature does not paint a rosy picture for all. It lays everything out for us to see — the rewards and punishments. It is meant to be seen as a fair warning where the end of days "shall be a time unsurpassed in distress."

Daniel also shows that those who "shall live forever" will "shine brightly ... like the stars forever." These poetic words appeal to those who struggle in this world and long for a world that is radically different — a world of everlasting peace.

Question

What does your world look like when you die?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

As we consider our 6 week theme—Our Heavenly Kingdom — we are reminded that Christ "took his seat forever at the right hand of God." It is there where our Lord intercedes for us.

Christ's desire is that we shall all enjoy the blessings of heaven. Though this is his intercession, desire, and prayer, His love dictates that we should freely choose to be with Him. He cannot force us to be with Him. However, to those who choose to love Him and desire to remain in Him, his intercessory prayer is answered.

Christ consecrates those who remain in Him by the power of the cross - "his one sacrifice for our sins." We no longer need additional sacrifices to appease our Father in Heaven. Christ's "once for all and never to be repeated sacrifice" is all that will ever be required to win our Father's pardon. There is only one thing required of us — to leave all behind and follow Him who won for us this pardon.

Question

How do you give thanks to the Father for pardoning your sins through the intercession of His crucified Son?

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Commentary

Gospel: Mark 13:24-32

This passage is similar to Daniel and is apocalyptic in nature. It too speaks of the end of days. With a little more detail than Daniel, Mark describes some of the horrors to be expected; tribulation, a darkened sun, a light-less moon, falling stars, etc. This doom-and-gloom scenario, according to writers of apocalyptic literature, is inevitable.

Nevertheless, after all is said and done, the elect will be gathered and enjoy the bliss of God's Kingdom. Unlike Daniel who speaks generally about how the elect shall be gathered, Mark is specific. "The Son of Man" — Jesus Himself — "coming in the clouds" with great power and glory" will orchestrate the gathering of the elect.

However, while Jesus is in charge of the end-times events, He admits, "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, not the Son, but only the Father."

The point for us is to be vigilant at all times and remain in the Lord so that when He comes we will be counted among the elect.

Question

What is your reaction to apocalyptic literature?

This Week's Task

Next week, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. It will be our last Sunday in our Church calendar. Our new liturgical year will begin in two weeks with the First Sunday of Advent.

As the year comes to a close, take an account of where you have been with the Lord. In what way have you had a closer walk with God? What area in your relationship with God needs improvement? Spend some quiet time this week to address these questions.

Prayer

The group says the following prayer together:

Father in Heaven, Creator of all and source of all goodness and love, please look kindly upon us and receive our heartfelt gratitude in this time of giving thanks.

Thank you for all the graces and blessings. You have betowed upon us, spiritual and temporal: our faith and religious heritage. Our food and shelter, our health, the loves we have for one another, our family and friends.

In Your infinite generosity, please grant us continued graces and blessing throughout the coming year.

This we ask in the Name of Jesus, Your Son and our Brother. Amen.

The prayer continues with Psalm 16

Psalm

Response: 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!

Conclude with an Our Father