



**Blessed Sacrament Parish**  
**Homily by Father Chris Comerford**  
**November 18, 2018 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Reading I Deuteronomy 12:1-3**

**Psalm 16:5-11**

**Reading II Hebrews 10:11-18**

**Gospel Mark 13:24-32**

**Homily**

There is a fairly gloomy beginning of the Gospel today. Jesus says it will be this way at the end. As we get to the end of the church year we now have one more Sunday in Ordinary Time and then we begin Advent, and we think about these “end things.” Now it is often confusing as we hear this Gospel and the discussion about “end times” because Jesus is talking about two different “end things.” The first was the destruction of the temple. And that was critical because of how important the temple was for the life of the Jewish people. It was the center of their worship. You can imagine if St. Peter's Basilica and the square in Rome were leveled and the Vatican leveled. It would affect us. But that event would not be close in comparison to the event of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and how it affected the Jewish people. That is because their whole worship of God was based on the Temple and now it was gone.

When did this happen? In the year 70 A.D. the Romans came and seized Jerusalem and pretty much destroyed the whole city including the Temple. They burned what they could, they knocked things over, and they killed around one million people. It was awful! Jesus mentioned in the Gospel that the Jews not accepting him would come to this. So many of the prophecies of the gloom and doom were based around that. And it is a challenge because so many people today try and interpret all of this about the “end times,” and you get people who are trying to predict when the end of the world will come.

There have been thousands of people who have predicted the time of the end of the world over the last two thousand years. Guess what? They've all been wrong. Every one of them. It is easy to fall into this. There are even some creative religions based on this. One of the biggest book-selling series of all time, “Left Behind,” is based on this idea. I recently watched a show about the Jehovah Witnesses and how deeply rooted their church is about the tribulation at the end.

But I think Jesus was speaking about another thing when Jesus was talking about the “end of time.” And he uses the prophecy of Daniel that “the Son of Man will come again in power and glory to protect his people.” Some thought the “end of time” would come in one generation, but Jesus was referring to the Temple. Jesus has promised that

earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. The words he has taught us are spirit and life to give us that strength that we need. He has also made clear, no one is to know the hour or the day he is coming except the Father. So what does that tell us? Don't try to figure it out. Don't be caught up in this idea of fear.

But we also have to look at the opposite extreme and that is to say, "I've got all the time in the world. There is plenty of time. I'll get things right, I'll start following God when I am old and don't care much about things anymore." We often think that way; "I'll take care of this next week, next month, next year, ten years." We keep putting things off about our faith. I think Jesus is showing us today — live each day prepared. Live each day in that loving relationship with God and there is nothing to be afraid of. That is a great challenge for us, and a great lesson. We don't know how long we have before we face God.

I recently celebrated a couple of funerals of those who died younger than anyone expected. We don't know how long we have to live. So the challenge is: Live each day to the fullest way of love. If there are things you need to repent of, repent of them. Seek the repentance of God, especially in reconciliation. Make things right with your family if you need to do so; don't put off for tomorrow what you need to do today. Stop procrastinating, that's what we are good at. The challenge is to live in the love of God. Now is the time to turn back to Him.

There was the lesson of the fig tree because when it turned green you knew that summer was coming. That was important in the Holy Land because most of the trees are evergreens, so they don't change, do they — they are always green. But the fig tree was seasonal, like so many of our trees, where the leaves come off. And we know when it is spring, those sprouts come out and thus it is the same way with the fig tree. It was an important image and Jesus talked about the bareness of the tree and compared it to the religion of the time and was showing that it needed new life. And the lesson is that God is there for us.

So the challenge is to take this lesson to heart. Do not be afraid, but also to not put things off and say "yes." There will come a time when things will be difficult. There will be a time when we have to stand before God. So hopefully we can change and open our hearts to Him. That's pray for that strength. We do have time to be open to the Lord's coming. Let's open our hearts to Him. Let's seek to say, "yes" to Him everyday and not put off in our faith what we can do today. We pray for that strength to live in that love that God has promised us.

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