

Sunday Message

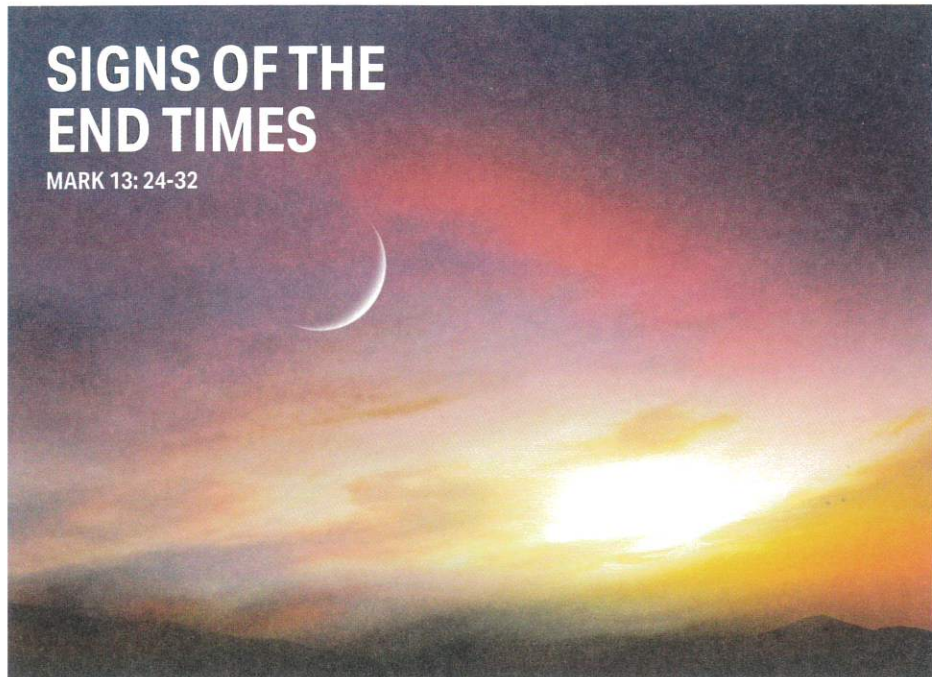
THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 17 November 2024 • Psalter Week 1

SIGNS OF THE END TIMES

MARK 13: 24-32



At the time of writing this Gospel, there is widespread persecution of the Christian community in Rome. The followers of Jesus are no doubt feeling threatened and uncertain as to how things will turn out for them.

In order to give his audience hope for the future, the Gospel writer seeks to present Jesus' vision. While on first reading today, the presentation feels somewhat bleak and daunting, this is not language we're used to reading at Mass on a Sunday. Jesus tells us there will be times of great turmoil, there will be wars and earthquakes, there will be famines. You will witness people betrayed by their peers and handed over to the authorities. The sun will be darkened, and the moon will lose its brightness. Many of Jesus' followers will identify with these words. The world around them seems to be falling apart. They will be challenged at every turn. But there must be light at the end of the tunnel. Jesus indeed sees beyond all this suffering to a place of peace with God. Jesus imagines peace beyond suffering. This vision is vital for the community who read Mark's Gospel. This vision of peace and love is vital for all of us gathered around the Gospel this weekend. ■

REFLECT

Next weekend, we will celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. The readings will change in tone and focus over the weeks ahead and we've been brought on a wonderful journey through Mark's Gospel over the past number of months. With everything we have been through with Jesus, his healing actions, his tenderness and compassion to the stranger - isn't it interesting that we end this period of time with Mark's Gospel talking about the end of time! What a way for us to enter the season of Advent in a couple of weeks! No doubt, there are certain movies that spring

to mind, where an asteroid is speeding towards earth, and only Bruce Willis or Will Smith has the power to save the planet. Talk of the end of time leaves us feeling a little anxious.

If we focus too much on the heaviness of the language in apocalyptic literature, we have missed the point. Jesus is a powerful preacher who teaches using contrasting images and forces. This is one of those occasions where we sit up and listen. Yes, there are times in our lives when the world around us seems to be caving in. There are times when the struggle to continue

SAY

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

(Mark's Gospel)

LEARN

"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."

(St. Therese of Lisieux)

DO

If you're a little out of practice in your prayer life, how about taking as little as 10 minutes a day to begin a conversation with God.



with life bears heavy on the weary soul. But within the struggle and the fight, the love, mercy, and compassion of Jesus is found.

As for our spiritual growth, Mark's Gospel is not about waiting for the end. It's about how we live here and now. It's a call to live with purpose and to cherish each moment. To be active participants in God's redemptive love living lives that are rich in love, abundant in service, and overflowing with the joy that comes from knowing him. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction.

You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING Daniel 12:1-3

A reading from the prophet Daniel.

"At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity."

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 15 (16):5, 8-11

Response: Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

1. O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize. I keep the Lord ever in my sight: since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. (R.)

- 2. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; even my body shall rest in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay. (R.)
- 3. You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right-hand happiness for ever. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 10:11-14,18

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews. All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. Christ, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Alleluia, alleluia! Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 13:24-32

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven 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; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

"Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS
Grant, O Lord, we pray, that what we offer in the sight of your majesty may obtain for us the grace of being devoted to you and gain us the prize of everlasting happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON
To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
We have partaken of the gifts of this sacred mystery, humbly imploring, O Lord, that what your Son commanded us to do in memory of him may bring us growth in charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Unless we look at a person and see the beauty that is in them, we can contribute nothing to them. One does not help a person by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly, what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was beauty none the less, and what he did was to call out this beauty.
Metropolitan Anthony Bloom