

Homily - Mark 13: 24-32
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
14th November, 2021 - Sooeey

The leader of a certain Indian tribe was dying, so he summoned his three sons and said: “I am dying; before my death, I must choose one of you to succeed me as the head of our tribe. I have the same task for each of you. I want you to climb our holy mountain and bring me back something beautiful. The one whose gift is the most outstanding will be the one who will succeed me.” The following morning the sons set out on their search, each taking a different path up the mountain. After several days the sons returned. The first brought his father a beautiful and rare flower that grew near the summit of the mountain. The second son brought his father a valuable stone, round and colorful which had been polished by the wind and the rain. The third son, who came empty handed, said to his father: “I have brought back nothing to show you father. As I stood on the top of the holy mountain, I saw that on the other side was a beautiful land filled with green pastures. In the middle of these pastures is a crystal lake. I have a vision of where our tribe could go for a better life. I was so overwhelmed by what I saw and by what I could see that I could not bring anything back.” The father replied: “You shall be our tribe’s new leader, for you

have brought back the most precious thing – the gift of a vision for a better future.” Well, today’s Gospel on the end time warnings, gives us a better vision of how to lead our lives.

The Readings of today on this 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time as we are coming almost to the end of the Liturgical Calendar, invite us to focus our attention on the threefold coming of Jesus: That is., a) His first coming according to the flesh as the Redeemer, b) His second coming, either at our death, or at the end of time and the world, which will bring our salvation to completion, and c) His coming into our lives each time we step forward in genuine Christian living. And we are assured that our God will be with us all the days of our lives and that we will have the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, guiding us, protecting us and strengthening us in spite of our necessary uncertainty concerning the end time when “Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead”. And through the parable of the fig tree, Jesus warns us all to read the “signs of the times,” reminding us that we must be ever prepared to give an account of our lives to Jesus because we do not know “either the day or the hour” of his Second Coming. We need always to be prepared to receive Jesus by accepting Him now as our personal

Savior, and doing now what He has commanded us to do.

St. Francis of Assisi was once working in his garden and a friend approached him and then asked him: “Well! What would you do if you learned you would die before the sun sets?” St. Francis reflected for a moment and then replied with a smile: “I would finish hoeing my garden. I would be faithful to what I am doing now.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a well-known German Theologian was asked by his critics: “Why do you expose yourself to all this danger? Jesus will return any day, and all your work and suffering will be for nothing.” Bonhoeffer said, “If Jesus returns tomorrow, then tomorrow I will rest from my labors, but today I have work to do. I must continue the struggle until I am finished.”

In the sacristies of the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity all over the world, one can see a little board hanging to remind each priest that he is to celebrate each Mass with devotion, freshness, contemplation and enthusiasm. The board says:

Priest of God,
Celebrate this Mass as if it is your First Mass,
Your Last Mass, and your Only Mass.

This is the same feeling that comes to my mind each time I celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

Well, dear friends, let us recognize the “second coming” of Jesus in our daily lives through everyday occurrences, always remembering that Jesus comes without warning. But let us not get frightened at the thought of Christ’s *Second Coming*, because Jesus is with us every day, abiding with the Father and the Holy Spirit in our hearts, dwelling in our Church in the Holy Eucharist, teaching us in the Holy Bible, and unifying us with Him and each other in our worshipping communities. We will be able to welcome Jesus in His Second Coming as long as we faithfully do the will of God by daily serving our brothers and sisters, recognizing Christ’s presence in them, and by being reconciled with God and with our brothers and sisters every day.

‘Life is a gift, God’s gift’, and let us live it to the full. And let us remember that our God is present wherever people treat each other with love, gentleness, compassion, generosity, and thoughtfulness. And so, let us try to bring Jesus on to this beautiful earth, as St.

Teresa of Calcutta puts it: “by doing small things with great love.”

And, may we live out today faithfully, that we become worthy of an eternal tomorrow in God’s kingdom. God bless you all, **Amen!**