

Tribulation and Hope

Thirty-third week of Ordinary Time – Mark 13:24-32

In this thirty-third week of Ordinary time, Jesus proclaims the coming sufferings that humanity will endure. **“In those days after the tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”** His message seems scary and ominous. It is filled with images of suffering and loss. What fate awaits the human race?

Jesus acknowledges God’s plan to reign over darkness and evil, establishing his Kingdom through the coming Messiah. **“And then they will see the ‘Son of Man’ coming in the clouds’ with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.”** This is truly a different message of hope. Those who believe and those who follow Christ will live eternally in heaven. But, how are we to know of this? How do we know that Christ is with us? That he cares for us?

Jesus’ message and story softens. It becomes compassionate and caring. **“Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates.”**

Christ is ever-present to us in the midst of our suffering and conflict. Christ is ever-present to us in our joys. Christ is ever-present in the simple daily tasks of raising families, maintaining our homes and working at our jobs. Christ’s saving work is present in the midst of the hurricane, the earthquake, the forest fire, the car accident and the many sufferings and violence of our times.

This is the human condition, to live the tribulations of this life, while maintaining the hope-filled faith that Christ is real and always with us. At Christ’s Second Coming the fullness of God’s reign will be realized. **“But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”** As the Church winds down this liturgical year, may we continue to find hope and comfort in God’s Word that Jesus proclaims this week **“will not pass away.”**

Blessings!


Sue Schettler