

**THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God of heaven and earth,
you want us all
one day to live in your home
and you will send
Jesus Christ to take us there.
Show us
how to prepare for him
and be ready when he comes,
so that we can be with you
in happiness
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of our readings is much like that of the first Sunday of Advent: the coming of Christ at the end of time. Our church year begins and ends with the conviction that Christ will come again and that he will bring judgment. We are told here, as we were in Advent, that we cannot know when that time will come. In Advent, we were told to "stay awake, be ready." Now, at the close of the year, we are told to look for signs.

Our reading from Mark tells us what some of these signs are that will signal the end. These signs, however, are apocalyptic—that is, dealing with the future, the last days in highly symbolic language. These "signs" are meant to convey something which is not known for certain—the "time" of salvation—and are not to be taken literally. The focus is not on the signs, but on the conviction that Christ will come again. For Christians, the Second Coming is awaited with joy. The apocalyptic language appears to suggest fear, but not for those "who are wise and have helped bring about justice; not for those who believe."

FIRST READING: Daniel 12:1-3

This is a reading from the prophet Daniel.

The time is coming when the great prince,
Michael, will come.
He will protect you.
At that time there will be much suffering.
But you will be safe.
Everyone whose name
is written in the book of life will be safe.

Those who have already died will wake up.
Some will live forever in happiness,
but others will be punished.
The people who are wise,
and who have helped bring about justice,
will shine like beautiful stars forever.

This is the Word of God.

RESPONSE: Psalm 27

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

GOSPEL: Mark 13:22-23, 26-32

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

When the time for the end of the world is near,
many things will happen.
People will come and do great things,
even miracles.
They will claim to be Christ
or one of the great prophets.
They will try to make you stop believing in God.
I am telling you these things
so you will be careful
and be on your guard.

And when the end of the world is very near,
people will see the Son of Man coming.
He will come with great power and glory.
He will send his angels all over the earth
to gather his chosen people together.

[I will explain this
by using the example of a fig tree.
When the branches of the tree
become soft and green,
and leaves begin to grow on them,
you know that summer is almost here.
It's the same way with the things
I have been telling you about.
When you see the things
that I told you would happen,
you will know that the end of the world
is almost here.]

And I tell you the truth,
everything will come to an end,
even the earth and the sky.
But my Word will never end.
What I say will last forever.
No one knows exactly
when all of this will happen.
God is the only one who knows.

This is the Good News of the Lord.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

**REFLECTING ON THE READINGS
WITH CHILDREN:**

After the Gospel, ask the children to recall what they heard. Language of suffering and death (first reading) is sometimes frightening to children. We do not want to pretend that it isn't real. Suffering and death are part of life. But Christians, however young, gradually (very gradually) come to see this as part of the mystery of Christ and, therefore, part of our salvation. Ask the children if they remember the Psalm Response. You may wish to sing it again. That is the point we want to stress. Nothing can take us from the love of God. God has promised that to us. Ask the children if they have ever heard someone say, "I give you my word." What does that mean? Ask them if they remember what Jesus said about his word in the Gospel. "My word will never end." We have the word of Jesus that nothing can take us from the love of God. Ask the children how they feel about that.

This would be a good time to focus on the many ways we experience God's constant love for us. Ask the children to recall ways that God has shown love and protection to them.

They should leave secure in the conviction that Christ will come again, and that we will live with him forever. The coming of Christ is a time of joy, not fear, for those who believe.