

**33rd Sunday of the Year (B)**

**November 18, 2018**

Daniel 12:1-3  
Psalm 16:5, 8-11  
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18  
Mark 13:24-32

More than on hundred years ago, as political events were churning toward the First World War, a French poet wrote a rather long poem about God and hope. Here are a few lines...

*The [virtue] I love best, says God, is hope.  
Faith doesn't surprise me ...  
Charity doesn't surprise me ...  
    these poor creatures ...  
    unless they had a heart of stone,  
    how could they not have love?  
But hope, says God, that is something  
    that surprises me. Even me ...*

That book-length poem is titled, "The Portal of the Mystery of Hope" by Charles Peguy.

To hope in some thing, to trust in some one, is priceless and tremendously valuable for life and happiness. To hope and to trust is to be in communion, to be in relationship with some thing more, some one outside of my own self. The present moment might be filled with difficulties and sadness, yet trust gives a reason carry on and anticipate the good that will emerge.

This Sunday, the lessons from Daniel and Mark are apocalyptic literature. You might think of the apocalypse as the fire and brimstone scenarios of the end of the world. We shake in our boots, afraid that we have made a mistake and there will be hell to pay. Yet, the apocalyptic mind-set in these lessons proclaims that the worst of times will give birth to the best to times. Apocalypse simply means uncovering the hidden trajectory of the world. The visions of destruction found within the word today will affect everyone, but not everyone will respond in the same way. This is where hope and trust enter and enable those who have nurtured these virtues to carry on with confidence and assurance. Even as we speak there are so many disturbing events with hurricanes and wild fires, perhaps as much as a thousand people still unaccounted for in California. The war in Yemen continues to bring starvation and death to innocent people, and some how, our nation is involved or associated with this destruction. Folks at our southern border asking for help and our leadership demanding a wall to keep us secure. This seems to be the worst of times, and for many, it is the worst of times.

I was stunned and surprised by the woman who lost a son or daughter in the shooting at the night club at Thousand Oaks, California. With overwhelming tears, she said, "I do not want your thoughts and prayers. I want action." Hope and trust in God and human

kind are nurtured and sustained through prayer. Yet, an equal amount of time and effort must be placed in addressing the problems we face, the suffering that people endure around the world. Awareness of these world events, supporting causes that demand changes in government leadership, calling for legislation that recognizes the need to protect the environment, saving those mistreated or abused because of ethnic background, we place our hope and trust in something greater. This is the apocalyptic mindset, the worst of time will give birth to the best of time.

Human kind has always lived in uncertainty, an ever changing world that is more than resistant to lasting and effective peace. We must note that the gospel passage today finds its home in the passion account of Mark where Jesus' suffering and death are impending. In a poetic kind of way, this lesson reflects Jesus' passion and the difficulties of the first century church. With Jesus we are invited to face the fear, to share the suffering, to denounce the evil. With the fig tree, we perceive the powerful force of life that is renewed again and again. There will be no despondency where the virtue of hope and trust are nurtured.

Perhaps, as we move into this new week, the words of Psalm 16 can be the mantra on our lips. "You are my inheritance, O Lord! You will show me the path to life, fulness of joys in your presence."

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Presider: Let us pray for needs of the church, of this gathered community, and for our world..

Our response: God of love, hear our prayer.

1. For all of us, for never failing awareness that we will one day be called to account for what we have done and what we have failed to do: We pray ...
2. For all leaders and citizens — for the ability to listen to one another with genuine humility, to reach across the divisions in our midst and build consensus to promote the common good: We pray ...
3. For the bishops of the United States, for wisdom and for courage, to make decisions that bring light to the darkness and hope to our people: We pray ...
4. For grace poured out and received among us — to stand with the poor, the immigrant, the vulnerable and the prisoner and to lead the many to justice: We pray ...
5. During this Thanksgiving week, for grace to step beyond the duty of routine and the frenzy of busyness to cherish the many gifts that are ours, to be mindful of gratitude as a way of life: We pray ...
6. For the sick of the parish; for all who live with dementia or mental illness, for those who face addiction each day: We pray ...
7. For all of our beloved dead, we pray:

The parish community would like to support you in prayer.  
Please share with us your needs and intentions.

Presider: O God, hear our prayers. Help and guide us until that hour when all will be transformed in your eternal grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

