

[Lk 21:25-28, 34-36](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,
and on earth nations will be in dismay,
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.
People will die of fright
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
And then they will see the Son of Man
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
But when these signs begin to happen,
stand erect and raise your heads
because your redemption is at hand.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy
from carousing and drunkenness
and the anxieties of daily life,
and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.
For that day will assault everyone
who lives on the face of the earth.
Be vigilant at all times
and pray that you have the strength
to escape the tribulations that are imminent
and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Reflections:

Deacon Bill Austin

2012 – didn’t see the movie yet, but I’ve heard the stories about the Mayan calendar that is perceived to foretell the end of the world. From what I’ve seen of the movie the end is going to be terrible. Today’s Gospel also seems to say a similar thing – the end is coming and it will be terrible. Is all of this true?

Well, yes and no. Yes, this earth we live on, this world we know will one day end. Modern science predicts this. Our sun will one day go nova and our earth will be consumed. Sounds frightening, doesn’t it? But the good news is that these events won’t happen for millions of years; or at least that’s what science thinks.

But there could well be other things that could be equally as terrible. We’ve already seen tsunamis around the world, earth quakes, viruses, fires, drought – many devastating events that some might perceive as the “signs” Jesus refers to when he says, ““There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.”

But the signs that Jesus refers to are signs that don’t necessarily foretell the physical end of the earth, though that will indeed happen, but signs that foretell the beginning of the fullness of God’s kingdom. They are signs that tell us of Christ’s return to the earth when all will be called to accountability for how

we lived our lives. He warns us not to become complacent, but to be vigilant. If we wait for the “signs” it will probably be too late. If we” become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life” we stand to be caught by “surprise like a trap.”

The season of Advent is a time for us to become aware of our need for vigilance, a time to focus on that time that will come. The end will come for each of us but unlike the Mayan calendar, there is no predicted date or time for us. We all hope our final day is far off in the future, but as I get older I begin to realize that that future is probably not as far off as I’d like it to be. And when that end comes, what’s next?

As believers, we hope in the promise of Christ that we will join him and all the saints in the heavenly kingdom. But even though Christ died for us so that the fulfillment of that promise is possible, he also calls each of us to live lives of complete compassion and total love. And on that day he we will be made to account for how we lived our lives. Unfortunately, there are many times in my life that I know I didn’t live up to Christ’s call, and I’d suspect that others may realize the same thing. So what are we to do?

Pray. Jesus calls us to pray so that we can have the strength to persevere and avoid the tribulations that are to come. Pray that we find the strength to live as Jesus lived, to love as Jesus loves, to place others needs ahead of ours.

As we begin this wonderful season of waiting we once again have the opportunity to focus on the work we have to do in order to grow stronger so that when that day comes, we will be able to stand before the Son of Man knowing that we are ready.