

From The Pastor

Thank you to all those who have already brought in food for the Thanksgiving food baskets. As mentioned, we are hoping to match or surpass our collection of last year so we can help as many families as possible. Any remaining food after the drive will go to our regular food depots and to the food pantry at St. Dennis parish. During this food drive feel free to come right up to the altar and place your gift in one of the baskets, or use one of the baskets near the doors. The regular food baskets may not be out, but don't hesitate to use the baskets at the altar.

The final weeks of the Church year present themes of end times with images of calamities, apocalyptic visions, and prophecies of epic battles between good and evil. These images reflect two fundamental themes. One, the world as we know it will end, and there will be resolution to the disorder of sin and evil against justice and righteousness. The second theme is that of hope and Resurrection. God the Lord is truth, and although all created things will pass away, the Word of God will remain, and all the just will enter God's reign.

These are not meant to be words that evoke fear and dread, but awareness and consciousness to the presence of the Kingdom of God. God has offered and accomplished redemption for all those who will seek it. This is a redemption of mercy, forgiveness, and unity. Should a harsh judgment be your concern, remember that God's judgment on the world is Jesus, with the intention that all should be saved. See John 3:16-20.

Toward the end of the gospel today we hear Jesus say, "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. The day nor the hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father". These are essential truths of created matter and the essence of divine being.

Geologically, through the science of metaphysics and created matter, the earth will in fact one day be no more. The sun, the earth, and sky will cease to be. This is a scientific fact. For believers in God who created all that is, it is equally true that God cannot cease to be. God is. God is love who is, who was and who will ever be. Jesus is the Word of God, the Word made flesh who came to make his dwelling among us. Jesus cannot pass away. His life, his mission, and his words are forever. In Him, we find life in God. This is the consolation of the truth of God. This is the rock and foundation of our faith and all that we base our lives on. The love of God is unchanging.

The Word of God has two faces. One is the face of Jesus and the other one is your face. The Word of God remains in two ways. First, in Jesus who is the eternal Word made flesh who preexisted in the Father. Secondly, the Word remains alive and active in the world through you and I. We keep the Word of God alive when we live the call of the gospel to spend our lives in love and service. We keep the Word alive when we speak of Jesus by what we say and do in his name. We make Jesus present in the world by believing, hoping, and trusting in his death and Resurrection, and that one day we will share in that Resurrection.

Earlier in the reading, Jesus calls us to see the signs of the times and the rhythms of the seasons. When the fig tree blossoms and bears fruit, we know it is summer. We naturally read the signs of the times in many other ways. We ponder and bemoan the signs of our times economically. We complain and worry about the moral, social, and cultural signs of our times. The believer who is close to Jesus will see the tensions and disorders between good and evil, sin and grace.

The mature believer will do much more than complain and make conversation in the coffee shop. The one who is close to Christ will learn to read the signs of their own life before the Lord. This is the call of the season that will be the bridge into Advent. Be awake, be conscious, know where you stand before the Lord. This takes effort and inner awareness. This is not the same as the sign of the times to go on a diet, or to freshen the house with a new coat of paint.

These signs are more interior that reveal the presence and the action of God in one's life. These signs come in various ways and have different messages depending on the person. For some it will be a sign to wake up and see reality, to live more consciously in love and relationship. For others, the sign will call for repentance for sin, or the forgiveness of a long held hurt. Some will hear a call to serve and put to good use the talents God has given. Still others will see signs to find peace, and more fully ground their lives in gratitude and joy. Some will be called to wake up to faith and make a decision to know the Lord in a mature and active way. Some will recognize the sign to be more committed to prayer in the service of God's purpose.

These signs are endless for those who are awake and attentive, and even more so for those who are not. They are constant and ongoing. This is the presence and action of Jesus who will remain with us to the end. When He comes, will He find any faith on the earth? That is up to you and me.

Father John Esper