

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

HOMILY FOR THE 33rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B)

15TH NOVEMBER 2015

“Heaven and earth will pass away” (Mark 13:31)

Our Gospel today sounds more like a horror story than good news.

The world as we know it will end.

Sometimes the Church has used Scripture like this to frighten us into faith, but this was not Jesus’ way. His most frequently repeated words to us are: “Do not be afraid.”

He came to show us how to love perfectly and, as St. John says, “Perfect love drives out fear.” (1 John 4:18)

So we can be sure that Jesus did not want to scare us, yet Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus foretelling the end of the world with vivid detail.

Jesus must have had good reason for saying these things.

So it is helpful to accept but not to worry about.

How not to worry?

1. Let’s complete the sentence that we verse that we started with.

“Heaven and earth will pass away *but my words will not pass away.*”

In other words, God will still be God; Jesus will still be Jesus.

That’s good, but what about us?

2. Our Catechism tells us: “On the Day of Judgement, at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to complete the final triumph of good over evil.” (CCC 681)

With the news from Paris fresh in our minds we need no reminding of the extent of evil in the world. The good news is that when the Son of Man, Jesus, comes he will eliminate evil from the world.

The Second Coming of Jesus does not mean the end of the world in the sense that nothing will be left; rather that our world will be recreated, returned to its original goodness, a new Garden of Eden.

3. There’s something even more reassuring - Jesus says that he will send his angels to gather in all whom God has chosen, but how do we know if we are chosen?

Presumably if evil has been eliminated the chosen must be perfectly good but how is this possible?

4. Our second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews comes to our rescue.

“By virtue of that one single offering, he (Jesus) has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is making holy.” (Hebrews 10:14)

So Jesus makes us eternally perfect when we place our faith in him.

That’s all we have to do, although faith does mean living according to his will as far as we are able.

Daniel in our first reading had a vision of all this before Jesus came. Some of the images that Jesus uses are similar.

Daniel sees “those who have instructed many in virtue” shining “as bright as stars for all eternity” (Daniel 12:3). We can all do that.

If we still doubt, let’s remember that, as baptised Catholics, our faithful reception of the sacraments is a partaking in Jesus’ one single sacrifice.

Finally, let no one worry about when it will happen.

Jesus tells us plainly that only God knows when. We do not need to know.

It will happen when the time is right just as a fig tree bears fruit at the right time. God is in control.

Jesus wants to lose no one (John 17:12) so there’s no need to worry about his Second Coming; no need to worry about anything.

Rev Geoffrey Carey