

## THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

November 14, 2021 B

**Facilitator:** *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the Word He wants us to hear this week.*

**Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.**

**Opening prayer:** *God of creation and history, you created all things to be fulfilled and brought to completion at the end of time. Make our hearts ready to greet you in glory in the fullness of time. Let your coming in glory be a time of rejoicing for each of us. Break open the meaning of your Holy Word as we share it together this day. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Response to last week's Word:** (Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.) *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** As we come to the end of the Liturgical Year, the focus of our readings is the end of the world—an event which is intended to raise terror in the hearts of the unjust and the unfaithful, but joy and consolation in the hearts of faithful Jews and Christians. Both Mark and Daniel are writing to persecuted communities. They seek to offer them hope in a time of great suffering. God and Jesus will bring them safely home, giving them new life that will last forever. In the second reading, the author contrasts Christ's single offering to the daily sacrifices offered by the temple priests.

*Let us listen to God's Word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to write it down to remember.*

Read the First Reading, the Psalm, and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

### FIRST READING: Daniel 12:1-3

Daniel is writing to a people who have undergone terrible persecution by pagan rulers. His message to them is one of hope and consolation and a firm assurance that, in the end, God will triumph over all evil, and God's faithful will ultimately experience deliverance. Michael, whose name means "one who is like God," is presented as the champion and guardian of Israel. On the Day of Judgment, both the just and the wicked "*who sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise*," and each will reap the consequences of his/her time here on earth. The wicked will experience "everlasting horror and disgrace" while the faithful will be "like the stars forever." This is one of the earliest references to belief in life after death in Old Testament literature.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM 16

Today's psalm is a beautiful prayer of trust and confidence in God in a time of distress.

### SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

This reading continues to contrast Christ's single offering, which removes all sin, to the daily sacrifices of the temple priests. So efficacious is Christ's

sacrifice that he now has no work to do other than to await the final judgment of his enemies.

### PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL:

*As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.*

**A participant reads the Gospel,  
then all pause to reflect.**

*As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to write down the word you hear.*

### GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-32

Chapter 13 of Mark is not easy reading. In the Bible, it is an example of a literary genre called Apocalyptic ("hidden") writing. This type of writing is not only obscure but it is difficult to interpret. It is meant to give hope to faith communities who are oppressed and to be a warning to those who oppress them. Apocalyptic literature is known for visions, allegories and complicated symbols. It looks ahead to the time when God will triumph over the powers of darkness. Mark has five different strands of thought: prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem (vv 1-2,14-20); warnings

about persecutions to come (vv 9-13); warnings about the dangers of the last days (vv 3-6,21-22); warnings about the second coming of Christ, also referred to as the Day of the Lord (vv 7-8,24-27); and the importance of vigilance (vv 28-37).

Mark, using typical apocalyptic symbols (darkened sun, unlit moon, falling stars), seeks to give hope to his persecuted community by referring to the triumphal return of the gloriously risen Christ who will soon put an end to their struggle. Obviously, Mark believes Jesus' Second Coming will happen during his lifetime.

Jesus uses the image of the fig tree to further assure his readers of the imminence of the Parousia (his Second Coming). Just as we know that summer is coming when the fig tree begins to blossom, so are the disciples to recognize the coming of the Son of Man when a period of affliction and cosmic signs occur. Then Jesus appears to contradict his earlier assertion about the imminence of the Parousia when he says: "As to the day and hour, no one knows... except the Father." This saying of Jesus is a warning to future generations not to get into the business of predicting the time of his return. Instead, we should busy ourselves with leading good and just lives, always ready for the Lord's return which will come like a thief in the night.

### FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. Daniel and Mark are writing for communities undergoing great distress in their lives. Who are the communities in our world undergoing persecution? What do you think motivates people to persecute people of faith? What causes religious bigotry?
3. We all have stress in our lives. What are some good and not so good (drinking, eating) ways we can deal with stress?
4. If you could ask God one question about the next life, what would that question be?
5. What inscription would you like to have written on your tombstone?
6. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed/act on.

**JOURNALING:** *Having listened to God's word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

### PRAYING WITH THE WORD

*Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestion: Lord, help me to keep my eyes fixed on you since you have the words of everlasting life—OR— Lord help me to look at your creation like the fig tree and know that you are near.*

### RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestions: Pray for the souls in purgatory and for the grace of a peaceful death for all who are dying at this time.

### CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER OF PETITION, THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

*What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we need to pray? Suggestion: Pray for all who are dying at this time and for Christians who have been persecuted for their faith.*

### CLOSING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

#### PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

**St. Michael the Archangel,  
defend us in battle.  
Be our defense against the wickedness and  
snares of the Devil.  
May God rebuke him,  
we humbly pray.  
And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts,  
by the power of God,  
thrust into hell Satan  
and all the evil spirits  
who prowl about the world  
seeking the ruin of souls.  
Amen.**