



Tuesday 21st August 2021
twenty-second week in Ordinary Time Year 1

First Reading

1 Thes 5:1-6, 9-11

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Christ has died for us, that we might live.

You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about 'times and seasons', since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to come like a thief in the night. It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is' that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it.

But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day to overtake you like a thief. No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong to the night or to darkness, so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else does, but stay wide awake and sober. God never meant us to experience the Retribution, but to win salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that, alive or dead, we should still live united to him. So give encouragement to each other, and keep strengthening one another, as you do already.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 26:1. 4. 13-14. R. v.13

(R.) I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord
in the land of the living.

1. The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink? **(R.)**
2. There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. **(R.)**
3. I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! **(R.)**

Gospel

Lk 4:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

I know who you are: the Holy One of God.

Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because he spoke with authority.

In the synagogue there was a man who was possessed by the spirit of an unclean devil, and it shouted at the top of its voice, 'Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the devil, throwing the man down in front of everyone, went out of him without hurting him at all. Astonishment seized them and they were all saying to one another, 'What teaching! He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority and power and they come out.' And reports of him went all through the surrounding countryside.

Reflection By Fr John Lovell

In our First Reading today from St Paul to his Christian community in Thessalonica, we see a sense of urgency but also reassurance. Urgency for them to remain vigilant, since 'the Day of the Lord' will come upon everyone suddenly when we least expect it, yet reassurance that those who keep faith have nothing to fear.

When do *you* think 'the Day of the Lord' will come upon us? What will it be like? Or perhaps, like that generation Paul was writing to, it won't come until after we have already left this world. Who can say!

Across the centuries there have been many doomsday cults and predictions warning of imminent apocalyptic disasters that would herald the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world. Such apprehensions must have been very much in the minds of people in Europe who witnessed the 5th Century invasions of Attila the Hun and the sack of Rome by the Arian Vandals. For others later on in the 11th and 12th Centuries, similar fears may have been brought on by the devastating raids of the Vikings or the arrival of the Black Death which claimed hundreds of millions of lives across Europe and Asia.

In the aftermath of all this we had Nostradamus, a 16th Century French astrologer whose predictions have been used by generations since his time to predict a host of wars, natural disasters and other millennial-type events. The Adventist movement in America was born out of an expectation that the Second Coming would occur in late 1843 or early 1844. When this didn't happen they revised the date. Countless other sects also gave specific dates for the end times to begin, though none of them came true. Some of us might remember the 1970s book and film *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey anticipating everything would come to a head in the 1980s. And more recently we had New Age interpreters warning the expiry of the Mayan Calendar would bring the curtain down on us all in December 2012. Yet, we are still here.

For us who have faith in Jesus, the 'Day of the Lord' is not doomsday but every Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, when in normal circumstances we come together to give thanks to God for all His gifts, and above all His gift of His very self in the Eucharist. Since the Eucharist is God's sign He is with us always and in everything we experience, we do not fear the future; and by the witness of our faith, hope and love, we bring His light and peace to those around us, which is especially important during the challenges of this present time of the COVID pandemic.