# “End Times”

The theme of our readings today is ***“preparation for*** ***end times.”*** Some of the words that are used to signify end times in Scripture are **“The day of the Lord,” “The day,” “That day,” “In that day,” On that day.”** End times, presumes that God has a plan for all of creation and all peoples. It implies a judgment day when those who have lived their lives according to the Gospel of Christ will be vindicated and those who did not, would end up in eternal damnation. Those who lived their lives in accordance to the Gospel are called the ***remnants*** or the ***survivors***. They will be refined during the period of end times.

The remnant or survivors such as people who survived during Noah’s time would be refined and become a new shoot that becomes the seed to carry out God’s plan. It is a fact of life that one day, our lives in this world will come to an end. Either by death or by being taken up into heaven by our Lord. Death will surely come except for those who are prepared when the last day are upon us, they are the righteous ones who would be taken up to heaven to live with God for all eternity. All our Scripture readings tell us to be prepared for that day, when our Lord will come again for the second time.

As we are getting closer to Advent which leads to the time of joy of Christmas, the Church is also reminding us not to forget about times of refinement when God cleanse the world of evil people so new shoot could carry on the work of God. We are also reminded of the second coming because our ultimate goal is heaven. We are reminded to be prepared all the time. In our first reading, through Prophet Daniel a servant of God. We a given a glimpse of what would happen during end times.

We are told that end time will be an unprecedented time of distress in the world. However, angel Michael, assigned to guard and protect the remnant would be with us. There would be resurrection of those who have died. Some would end up in hell where there would be shame, disgrace, and unimaginable suffering. Some, would enter into the joy of the Father and live forever in heaven. They are the ones who would shine brightly because they had kept the commandments of God and followed in His ways. They would the result of their hope, their faith, and love of God would save them.

We are also given the promise that those who did not hid their lamp but put it on a stand so, its light may be seen, because their light help others to see the light of God’s glory on earth, they would shine like the stars. They did what they were told to do and by the grace of God, they would receive their reward from Him who is all merciful, compassionate, and all love. The era of the Hebrew Bible is important to us because it reveals the unfolding of God’s loving plan. It is our history because the chosen people are our big brothers and sisters just as David was the ancestor of Jesus.

In our second reading, the Church reminds us that our salvation does not come from us. But from Him who laid down His life for us by becoming our high Priest and victim. His once and for all death on the tree of life has made perfect those who have been consecrated. His priesthood is not like that of the Levitical priests in the Hebrew Bible who continuously sacrificed blood of animals that had no power take away sins. His perfect sacrifice was once and for all. He shed His blood for all humankind, but we have to be receptive to that forgiveness.

The preaching of Jesus reached many people. To those who accepted His word, up till the end of time, for them, the word would be like a seed planted in good soil in their heart, soul and mind. They accepted His words and acted on them which leads to the forgiveness of their sins. God is the one offended by sin. A king Davidprayed, **“Against you, you alone have I sinned”** (Psalm 51:6a).Only the God made man, Jesus Christ, can bring about the forgiveness of sin. It is through the sacraments that this forgiveness is granted to us, first in baptism, through the Eucharist, and by means of the sacrament of reconciliation.

The only work we have to do through the help of the Holy Spirit is to be open to forgiveness.

We could never make any payment for our sin. Jesus alone can do that for us and He has done it once and for all by His sacrifice. His blood has been shed once and for all for the remission of our sins. The penance that we receive after confessing our sins is not a kind of payment for our sins. God’s forgiveness has been granted to us because of what Jesus has done.

The penance we receive during confession is for satisfaction or intended to be the opposite of the sin we have committed. It is supposed to be for the purpose of healing and not punitive for the purpose of payment. It is for the purpose of turning our life around towards God.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus gave us a more vivid account of what would happen during end times. Jesus told us that the powers in heaven would be shaken. The sun and the moon would give no light and the stars would drop from the skies like flies. It is after all these signs that He would come with great power, glory, and majesty. He would not come as a defenseless child who came to save us the first time. He would come to judge and not save the world. He would have His angels gather the remnant form all nations on the earth and those who are already in heaven would joined together as His perfect body.

Jesus warned us to read the signs of the time just as we read the signs of the time of the seasons of the year. In other words, He warned us to be prepared for His coming like a thief at night. In His message about the end times, is embedded the warning about the destruction of the Temple that happened in 70 AD. He said this generation would not pass away before that happened. But as to the end of time as we know it, only the Father knows the appointed time.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask for His grace to be prepared for His second coming.