

Alleluia! Alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children. Alleluia!

Luke 12:35-40

Jesus said to his disciples: 'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Notice the Eucharistic overtones in today's Gospel: the themes of "wedding" and "table" where, the master himself serves the guests as at the Last Supper. "See that you are dressed for action" is also a clear reference to the Passover Meal. Jesus directly associates the Paschal meal with the waiting for his return. And it is true, that whenever we celebrate the Eucharist, we always do so, in readiness to greet the Lord when he comes again. At the consecration we cry out: **Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again!**

As Christians, there must be a healthy tension in our lives. On one hand, we are called to rejoice in faith, confident that God's reign has begun and yet, on the other hand, we must not become complacent, as we still await the Lord's return in glory. Our words and actions, our very lives must reflect Christ's victory over sin and death, but in faith we must remain vigilant and ready to greet the Master when he comes again.

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

7th August 2022

You Must Stand Ready, Strong in Faith



Remember, in St Luke's Gospel, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, a spiritual journey coming to know and fulfilling the Father's will & we are being invited to accompany him on this road leading to life. Over these Sundays we are listening to random, but important sayings of Jesus, all connected to the End Times. Last week we heard that we must endeavour to make ourselves rich in the sight of God and today there is an urgency in Jesus's words: "See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit" ready to greet the Lord when he comes again.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, whom, taught by the Holy Spirit, we dare to call our Father, bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters, that we may merit to enter into the inheritance which you have promised.

Wisdom 18:6-9

That night had been foretold to our ancestors, so that, once they saw what kind of oaths they had put their trust in, they would joyfully take courage. This was the expectation of your people, the saving of the virtuous and the ruin of their enemies; for by the same act with which you took vengeance on our foes you made us glorious by calling us to you. The devout children of worthy men offered sacrifice in secret and this divine pact they struck with one accord: that the saints would share the same blessings and dangers alike; and forthwith they had begun to chant the hymns of the fathers.

The Book of Wisdom is attributed to King Solomon (991 BC), but in fact, it is much later, written in the last century BC, influenced greatly by modern Greek thought. In today's short passage the author reflects on the night of the Exodus, when God led his enslaved people to freedom. The author is clear however, that this incident is more than just punishing the Egyptians. No, through this act, God is calling Israel to become his people in a special way. In recognizing this, they must live their lives accordingly. We too, have entered into a special bond with God through the death and resurrection of his beloved Son, and just like the Israelite's freed from bondage, we too must reflect this in the way we live our lives.

Psalm 32(33):1,12,18-20,22

Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just; for praise is fitting for loyal hearts. They are happy, whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen as his own.

The Lord looks on those who revere him, on those who hope in his love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul is waiting for the Lord. The Lord is our help and our shield. May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Hebrews 11:1-2,8-12

Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen. It was for faith that our ancestors were commended.

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going. By faith he arrived, as a foreigner, in the Promised Land, and lived there as if in a strange country, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. They lived there in tents while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God.

It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore.

Today we begin a series of four passages from Hebrews commencing from chapter 11 (The majority of this Letter is read in Year B). The author is unknown, possibly Apollos or Barnabas, but it was written around AD 67-70 for a Jewish Christian audience and the writing emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus Christ, revealer and mediator of God's grace. Over the coming weeks we are going to reflect on 'faith' and today's passage begins with a hymn to faith. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, are praised for their faith, through which they already share in the rewards of God.

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation.