

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

*He shall gather his elect from the four winds.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

17 NOVEMBER 2024

## TIMES OF GREAT DISTRESS

The time we live in could be described as a time of great distress. News of wars, destruction, floods, fires and so much more assail us. There are still some who stand on street corners with a sign proclaiming, 'The End Is Nigh'. Still others raise alarms on websites and social media. Our first reading today, taken from the last chapter of Daniel, presents Michael the Archangel warning of the end, of a time of great distress. He recounts the resurrection of the dead where those sleeping in the dust will be separated: some will be awakened 'to everlasting life' and others 'to shame and everlasting contempt'.

Paralleling this, in the Gospel of today, Jesus speaks to his disciples as his Passion looms. He speaks in apocalyptic, end-times, language of 'a time of distress' when the lights in the sky will fall. These events hail the coming of the Son of Man who will gather his chosen. This is the hope of what will come beyond the trials and crucifixion of Jesus, an assurance of God's presence echoed in Jesus' words, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away'.

In days of distress we, like the disciples, can hear Jesus' words, the Good News, if we remain faithful. The emphasis is not on what will pass away but on the saving grace of God who has sent his son, Jesus, and will raise him for the salvation of all. The end is not the end for those awakened to everlasting life.

Dr Rosemary Canavan

## FIRST READING

Dan 12:1-13

**A reading from the prophet Daniel**

*When that time comes your own people will be spared.*

'At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.'

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 15:5, 8-11

**R. Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.**

- O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; / it is you yourself who are my prize. / I keep the Lord ever in my sight: / since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **R.**
- And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; / even my body shall rest in safety. / For you will not leave my soul among the dead, / nor let your beloved know decay. **R.**
- You will show me the path of life, / the fullness of joy in your presence, / at your right hand happiness for ever. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Heb 10:11-14, 18

**A reading from the letter to the Hebrews**

*By a single offering he has achieved the eternal perfection of those who are sanctified.*

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices



which are quite incapable of taking sins away. Christ, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, at the right hand of God, where he is now waiting until his enemies are made into a footstool for him. By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 21:36

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Be watchful, pray constantly, that you may be worthy to stand before the Son of Man. Alleluia!**

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