

SSC REFLECTION: 1st SUNDAY ADVENT Year C.

Lk 21:25-28. 34-36. [Fr Donal McIlraith]

TEXT. Lk 21: 25-28.34-36.

Sunday Text. Lk 21:25-28. 34-36.

[25]"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,

[26] men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

[27] And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

[28] Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

[34]"But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare;

[35] for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.

[36] But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man."

Reflection

1. With this gospel passage from Luke, (this is the year of Luke) we start a new liturgical year that will stretch until the Feast of Christ the King next year, 2022. You may have noticed that Advent opens with the same sermon about the end times which we saw two weeks ago. You remember this had three elements, the end of Jerusalem the end of the world and the coming of Christ, the Son of Man. The emphasis now, as we prepare for Christmas, is on the final coming of the Son of Man – and how we should respond. Every year at this time, the Church reminds us that, yes, Jesus is coming and we must be always ready to welcome him with love.
2. The focus today is on the final coming of the Son of Man. Jesus is applying the text of Dan 7:13-14 to himself. He comes with clouds.

These mean the very presence of God. So, when Jesus, through whom the whole of creation was made, gets off his heavenly throne to visit us, it is no surprise that the elements he created, are shook up, sun, moon, stars. This happens in heaven and there is panic on earth.

3. But this is a wonderful event for Christians. We are encouraged to “stand erect” because Jesus brings us full and final redemption, freedom. We are told to take care of our hearts, our inner life. Don’t let carousing, (getting drunk) or drunkenness or the cares of life distract us from Christ. His coming could be sudden like the trap that snaps and catches the mongoose. We must watch and pray that we be ready to welcome Christ with clean, loving and joyful hearts whenever he comes. Alas for those who have no love when he comes.
4. The implication here is also that Christ comes as judge for the final judgment. At death each of us is judged individually. The final judgment will reveal to the entire world why each of us has received her/his just and merciful judgment. This teaching is clear also in the tradition of the Church (CCC 678-679; especially 1021-1041).

For your interest:

Here again is the Week 33 Gospel from Mk 13:24-32. Spot similarities and differences with Luke’s version. Note that this week’s gospel skips Lk 21:26-31. That is probably because it is the same as Mk 13:28-32 which we have already read.

[24]"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

[25] and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

[26] And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

[27] And then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

[28]"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

[29] So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

[30] Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place.

[31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

[32]"But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.