

33rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle – B; Nov. 17th 2024
Daniel 12: 1-3; Hebrews 10: 11-14; Mark 13:24-32

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

God brought the people of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt offering them a better place; in other words a Promised Land where milk and honey flowed. Despite their infidelity in the desert, finally, after forty years of sojourn in the desert God gave them the Promised Land. In order to enjoy happy and prosperous life the only condition God placed before Israel was their total fidelity to His Commandment. But in the case of Israel we see them totally desecrating the Promised Land God gave them. Having settled down in the land of Canaan, the people of Israel often abandoned the God who brought them out of Egypt and gave them the vision of a great future. They had to pay heavy price for their infidelity, in the form of exile in the foreign lands.

The period of bondage continued for centuries and we see God liberating his people now and then. Whenever there were severe persecution and distress, the prophets came to the aid of people with their great promises for the bright future. In today's first reading we see the apocalyptic writing of Prophet Daniel which took place around 165 BC. *The literal meaning of 'apocalypse' is: revelation of something or making something known fully.* **The Book of Revelation** is the good example of apocalyptic writing. Very often the promises come out of the vision of the Prophets. Here Daniel describes the dramatic intervention of the Arch Angel Michael to save the people; though no time frame is given, the hope is still very radiant.

In the gospel passage of this weekend we have quite an unusual passage from the Evangelist Mark. From the very nature of the writing, we can conclude that it is an apocalyptic writing. The predictions of Jesus seem to be very frightening, for he speaks about the tragic end of the world. **But if we look at the predictions of Jesus closely, we know that there is a great promise lying beneath them.** Mark, who wrote his gospel during the severe Roman persecution against the first century Christians, promises them the same promise which Prophet Daniel made to his people. As Mark sees, the chaotic happenings are the prelude of the better life ahead. **Here Jesus is promising his people that one day he will appear again to lead his people to another Promised Land, beyond this world.** This reading is an invitation to us, rather than a threat. Jesus is promising us that this world is not where we will have a permanent abode; rather it is the first step towards the Promised Land. So we need to be patient and be prepared for the **Second coming of the Lord.**

We blame the ancient people for their lack of culture and education; very often the present generation considers the ancient people as barbarians. But the modern generation is living in a chaotic and crime filled world. Though the present generation claims to be more educated and cultured, the crimes, depression, suicides and addictions are alarmingly increasing in the world. **There is only one reason for all the chaos in the world that many people don't see a Promised Land beyond this world.** As a result they get disappointed when things go wrong in their lives. We believe that the science and technology can offer us anything and everything. The modern science and technology give a false promise to mankind that the world itself is the heaven and they don't have to look for another one and they don't need a super power, known as God to control and guide them. But at the critical situation, when they come to know that the technology or science in which they had absolute trust cannot help them, they feel that the earth under their foot is slipping away.

At the same time the people who keep a vision for a living beyond this world, know how uncertain and transitory the life in this world is and they will not be shaken when the adverse things happen to them. For they know that they have a great **Promise** from Jesus Christ. If there is no life beyond this world, what is the meaning of our suffering and the short life in this world? The dream of the eternal life is a '*thing of beauty forever*' and it will help us to endure in our imperfect worldly life. Only in the view of the eternal life we can find purpose and meaning in birth and death. As believers, we don't have to worry about the end of the world; rather be prepared for our end of journey in this world and look forward to reach *the Promised Land*. Then we are least bothered about the final knock on our door from Jesus. Jesus warns his followers, **“You also must be prepared, for an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come” (Lk 12:40).**