

### **33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

We're coming to the end of the liturgical year and our scripture readings today encourage us to be aware that **time** is important and not to be taken for granted.

#### **Daniel 12:1-3**

There will come a time of great suffering and distress, but the Lord will protect his faithful people.

#### **Hebrews 10:11-14. 18**

Christ has offered himself as the supreme sacrifice to forgive all sin, and awaits the fulfilment of God's kingdom and glory.

#### **Mark 13:24-32**

Jesus speaks to his disciples about the coming of the Son of Man in glory and its consequences.

*As we listen to Mark's Gospel today it might be helpful to realise that Mark is using a special type of literature in this chapter 13. All the accounts of Jesus' talk about "**the end time**" and the signs that will accompany it, belongs to the type of first-century writing known as "**apocalyptic**." In the early church, apocalyptic writing was used to communicate hope to fearful people by revealing how God would definitively save his faithful ones from any and all evil forces at the end of time. Apocalyptic literature made up a small (in content) but very significant (in meaning) part of Christianity's first gospel message.*



**“TAKE THE FIG TREE AS A PARABLE”**

**“But of that day or hour, no one knows,  
neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son,  
but only the Father” . .**

Mark used apocalyptic language from the Hebrew Scriptures (Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah) to speak about the end-times and Christ's final coming. Christ's followers were encouraged to stand firm in their faith that God would intervene and vindicate them. After a period of tribulation in which the very cosmos would be shaken, Christ will come with “great power and glory” to bring salvation to God's creation. The exact “day or hour” of Christ's return was not a part of the revelation he came to impart. His followers were to be prepared for his coming whenever it might occur. The blooming fig tree, a symbol of Israel's Messianic days, suggested hope in the coming fruitful harvest of justice.

As always at this time of year, we begin to contemplate the end of the world - a theme that carries us over next Sunday's feast of Christ the King and so into Advent.

Such a contemplation is not gloomy or morbid: throughout the ages (and especially in the early days) Christians have been utterly positive about the coming end of everything, because we know what will happen, and in fact we earnestly desire it to come: the phrase that gives this away is in the Gospel: “Then” he will send his angels to gather his chosen from the four winds. This gathering together of God’s children will be a truly wonderful event, when we will all be completely enfolded in that love of God that we talk about so much.

