

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Nov 27th 2014

The Scripture readings for today require some focused reading and thought; they are full of images that range broadly from comforting to threatening to hopeful.

First a reading from the Book of Revelation? Revelation was written in approximately 95 A.D. by John who may or may not have been the Apostle John. More likely a follower of the Apostle wrote it during a time of imprisonment for his beliefs. He leaves a legacy to hundreds of thousands of readers and scholars of deciphering what indeed the message may mean for our lives in the here and now.

Sources I cited explain that this type of writing, “with difficulties”: symbolic, mysterious, imaginative, allusive, yet full of the author’s vision of heaven, was popular with the people of the times. Does that mean that if read it from a place of love of fantasy literature, these passages are musical and familiar in and of themselves and leave the rest of us searching for a personal place to catch on to for meaning?

There is a strident warning for the Babylonians and their likely future, often thought to allude to the Romans and their militaristic control of the Israelites of the time. “She has become a haunt for demons, a cage for every unclean bird, for every unclean beast.”

Despite the difficulties, we are assured that we are to trust in God’s promise, to stay the course, despite the barriers that we find on our path.

Lest we lose heart, today’s Psalm, in stark contrast, has words for “those faithful to the LORD.” Promises, from “the LORD, whose kindness endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.”

The Gospel passage from Luke takes up with Christ’s foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem and His Second Coming, the Salvation of those who have remained true to his message.

The passage ends with the familiar picture of “signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars “with consternation below on earth. “But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.”

Today is within a few days of the end of the Liturgical Year, a good time to take stock. In what set of images do I belong? Am I OK with that self-assessment? What do I want to do about it? Where can I recognize God's presence in these thoughts and what will I say to God about it?

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