

SUNDAY 19 YEAR C.

This is the first time I have been with you since my 10th anniversary celebrations.

So I would like to express my thanks for the messages of support I received from so many of you. It gives me so much encouragement. Thank you all.

Now for today's scripture.

I think the overriding theme is that of the necessity for a trusting faith in God's promises and our vigilant preparedness.

The first reading cites the faith-filled preparedness of the ancient Jewish slaves in Egypt, before their mass exodus to the Promised Land. Their trusting faith in God's promise led to their liberation

In the second reading, Paul, defines faith as "the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen"

Paul here is trying to bolster the faith of the Jewish Christians, by appealing to the faith of their ancestors, starting with Abraham and reviewing what they have accomplished through faith.

He reminds us that only faith can guarantee the blessings we hope for.

In the Gospel Jesus challenges His disciples, and us as well, to trust in God's promise of eternal happiness, but warns of the necessity for vigilance because the Son of Man will return when least expected.

A week ago I had a difficult medical experience.

I went into hospital on Thursday for a planned procedure Which was declared successful and I was discharged. However that night I experienced Pains in the chest and shortness of breath. It was quite frightening so back into hospital I went. It turns out that there was no real problem and after further treatment 6 days later I was discharged. It was however quite distressing at the time.

This begs a question for us all.

What would you do; if you knew for certain that you were going to die and meet your Maker at the stroke of midnight tomorrow night.

This very question was put to St Francis of Assisi by one of his brothers and his response was “I would finish hoeing my garden”

No doubt, trusting in God, he was comfortable in just carrying on with his life as normal. But for us the question remains how would we react.

Perhaps if, in our lives, we had taken heed of the many reminders about vigilance, as we heard today, we would feel the same as St Francis. Or perhaps not..

Jesus, in the 2nd part of the Gospel, exhorts His followers to be Steadfast in their faith and ever vigilant.

In Jesus day, much of the servile work was done by slaves, including the stewards who were entrusted with the management of the household

In the masters absence they were in complete control. A wise

Steward was always ready for his masters return.
In this parable Jesus teaches us the need for constant vigilance.
Since the time of our death is quite uncertain, we too must be ever
Ready to meet our Lord. When that moment comes, hopefully
Jesus will find us carrying out our tasks of love, mercy, and service
and at peace with God.

Waiting for Christ to return means working for the coming of the
Kingdom of God. This means doing Gods' will by rendering
humble service to others, to help in the tasks of combating
poverty, hatred, those things that divide us, and establishing peace
among individuals and nations.

Remembering at all times the need and value of a prayer and
service to God.

I leave you with Jesus words at the beginning of the Gospel.
“There is no need to be afraid my little flock, for it has pleased
Your Father to give you the Kingdom.
Sell your possessions and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do
not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in Heaven where no
thief can reach it and no moth destroy it. For where your treasure
is, there will your heart be also”