

Homily. 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 13/14 November 2021.

Sometimes I wish that the world would just slow down, that life would be simpler, clearer, more clean cut, and that everything would stop changing and take a rest for a while. I think that we can all relate to having felt this way now and then. But, let's be honest, if everything did slow down and come to a stop then I'm pretty certain that we'd soon be bored with the same things and people, static and unchanging day after day after day. We'd become restless, wanting to move and get on with it, because change and movement brings challenge and colour into our lives, making them richer, more meaningful and worthwhile.

We, and our world, are designed for movement and change since it's these factors that allow growth and life to happen. On the big scale, the stars and planets revolve and hurtle through space, the continents drift and the landscape evolves over millennia. On a personal level we grow, developing our skills, talents and understanding of what is and isn't real. By moving through time we change and this endless change open up new ways for us to grow and to live. The trick here is to find our stability and stillness in this dynamic experience, not to hide and avoid it altogether.

The Prophet Daniel and Jesus speak about the coming of a great time of change and challenge. They use images and words about a period of unsurpassed distress since the nations first came into being, of the dead rising up from the dust of the earth, of the Sun and Moon being darkened, of stars falling from the sky and the powers of heaven being shaken, which is all scary stuff to hear. Yet, there is more!

Daniel tells us that those who have been faithful to God, with their names written in the book of life, will escape the tribulation and that the wise and just will be the new stars shining brightly in the heavens. Jesus says that after the great changes are over the Son of Man will appear in glory with the Angels gathering in all who have kept the faith and stood firm, adding that heaven and earth and all that we know will surely pass away, but that His words will never pass away.

The processes of change must go on, no matter what we might wish. Change, life, growth and dying, these are the only constants in this world. Wishing otherwise is fine, but trying to stop it all is foolhardy. What Daniel and Jesus reveal is that this pattern, hard as it may at times be for us to cope with, has a purpose to play. This purpose is nothing less than new discoveries emerging from our pain of loss, new life rising from out of death, the resurrection of humanity and the renewal of the universe itself.

This is the Good News tucked away amidst all of those the scary words and visions. In fact, it's the heart of what we celebrate and do here when we become the Church, taking people and words, gestures and prayers, bread and wine, letting the Spirit get to work in us and on them. In return everything moves, changes and transforms into Jesus Christ, life Himself, given to us in love. This is all done for us so that forgiveness and healing reigns and that the chaos wrought by evil and our sins is banished from our hearts and cast out of our world for all eternity. Knowing this we can praise our God everyday saying; O Lord, you really are my inheritance, my hope, my life and my everlasting delight.