

[Readings: Wisdom 18:6-9; Ps. 33; Heb 11:1-2, 8-19; Lk. 12:32-48]

There's a good deal of modern liturgical music that celebrates the arrival of God's justice. In these hymns, we tend to call out for God's justice to descend. We sing it happily, joyfully, with pep and vigor, unaware that when this justice arrives, it might be directed at US.

Yes, we know that there is evil in the world. Yes, we know that not everyone loves God and neighbor. But, surely WE do! Surely WE are among the righteous.

This attitude is behind Peter's question to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus exhorts the disciples to sell everything. They are to give alms, storing up treasure in heaven. Nothing they have received is their own.

Jesus concretizes this exhortation through a parable. Disciples are like servants who await their master's return from a wedding. Their lamps are lit. They're ready to serve the needs of the master. In this readiness, there will be a great reversal. The master will instead serve them. They will be called to the wedding banquet. Why the role reversal? The commentaries suggest that after three days of wedding celebration, the master returns home drunk!

Jesus then introduces another motif to the parable. Part of the responsibility of those servants is to make sure that no one breaks into the master's home. Here, we have the introduction of evil, the possibility of danger. Someone could break into the house, wreaking havoc.

After Jesus has preached, has spoken this parable, Peter asks his question, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" (Lk 12:41). We must admit that we don't know the precise motive for Peter's question. Perhaps he was confused, unable to determine the meaning of Jesus' preaching. We see a lot of that in the Gospels – Peter not getting the message right!

At the same time, it's possible that Peter understood exactly what Jesus was saying. We could imagine the disciples talking among themselves, "Are we really servants? Aren't we part of Jesus' chosen band?"

If justice is coming, it's going to be directed at the Roman city state, to the hypocrites, to the sinner! Surely not us!"

Jesus, as He often does, doubles down. He recognizes the leadership provided by the apostles: the earliest disciples. If you're in charge, get ready. If the Master comes and finds you being unjust, not distributing bread, there will be a severe punishment. To the one who has been given much, much will be expected. To those who have been given even more, more will be expected.

The disciples know God's will. They have dwelt in the presence of Jesus. They have been given much. If they don't share it, if they're not vigilant, they will be the ones judged. Of course, Jesus' preaching is not only directed at disciples who came long ago.

Since it is the living Word, active and alive, it is directed at you and me. We also know the will of God through Jesus Christ. We have the sacraments, Scripture and the teachings of the Church. We have been given even more than the disciples, because we know the end of the story: that Jesus Christ has come to redeem the world.

I enjoy the verses from our Second Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews that speak of our Old Testament ancestors in faith standing and looking from a distance and saluting us from afar. They did not see the arrival of the Messiah before they died, but they had faith that it would come to pass.

It reminds me of our own ancestors who came to this country from Europe, Asia or Africa. What courage and faith they must have had in leaving their familiar homelands, with their own ancestors standing and looking from a distance as they left the comforts of home looking for the American Dream.

When I was a student in junior high school, the Civics teacher gave us the homework assignment of asking our parents where our ethnic ancestors came from and why they wanted to come to America. My Mom's grandparents came from Poland, and my Dad's parents came from Poland.

When I asked them why they came here, my mom offered her answer first. I learned after her passing that she was prone to exaggeration when she relayed family stories. She said, "Your great-grandfather had a wanderlust. He

travelled all over the country. He was present when they pounded that gold spike that joined the western and eastern railroads.” When I saw my great-grandfather’s tombstone, it showed that he was born five years after the spike! But he did settle in Detroit, built five houses in the Poletown area where St. Hyacinth Parish is, and lived off the rental income from those properties.

When I asked my Dad why HIS parents came to America, before he could open his mouth, my Mom blurted out: “Because they were being chased by the police!

So, let’s ask ourselves, “Are we ready?” Are we ready for the coming justice of God? Are we servants of the Word of God, or do we distribute our own bureaucratic, technocratic regulations? Is our parish a place of vigil, where we await the coming of Our Lord in the Eucharist and in the Scriptures? Or do we live as if God is not present among us? Is our parish a space where the hungry and thirsty and those on the margins are treated as the living, abiding presence of Jesus Christ?

Have you experienced God as trustworthy, or do you keep your guard up?

How would your life be different if you didn’t have faith in God?

How would your life be different if your faith in God was absolute?

Through baptism, we are servants of the living God. Better get ready and recognize that the coming judgment may be directed toward us. The reward, if we’re ready, is the greatest wedding we’ll ever attend: the heavenly Supper of the Lamb. AMEN!