

33RD SUNDAY - ORD. (B)! WILL I BE AMONG THE ELECT?

We are getting close to the end of the Church year. The end of the calendar year is also fast approaching. All things, even the world as we know it, will come to an end. It is time, therefore to think seriously about the end of time. This is what the readings of today draw our attention to. The readings also make us aware that there is a struggle between good and evil and at the end of everything, the good will triumph.

The word addressed to Daniel was that, there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since nations began until that time; but at that time his people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book; the book of life. Michael the Archangel would arise to deliver them. Daniel was told that not all those who shall awake from the dust of the earth shall have everlasting life. Those who would experience everlasting life are the wise, and those who turn many to righteousness. They would shine like the stars forever.

John also saw a similar vision like that of Daniel: "I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls," (Rev.20:12-13).

These people saw their visions hundreds of years apart, but the message is the same, in the sense that their visions talk about the end of time and what is going to happen to all human beings. There is going to be a separation between the righteous and the unrighteous.

Jesus also told His disciples that there would be great trouble and there will be great darkness because all the sources of light will not function. Then the Son of Man will come with great power and glory, and the angels will gather the elect from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. And "when the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit upon His glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before Him.

And He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,” (Mt.25:31-32).

Jesus told them also that; “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”. This is because He is the Word itself that existed from the beginning and His word gives life. He was reminding them that what we see around us which attracts us so much that we forget about His word will not last. The world as we see it will pass away.

How can I find my name in the book of life, and how can I be among the elect? These are the questions I have to ask myself every day and night. At this moment of my life, I am a follower of Christ; He has given me the grace to be His priest to minister to His people. But is that a license to have my name written in the book, and also be chosen? The message of St. Paul to the Church in Corinth is something to reflect on; “Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified,” (1Cor.9:25-27).

Is your being a Christian a license to be among the elect? No, it is not. How am I disciplining myself morally and spiritually? What goals have I set for myself as I live my Christian life that fits into the goals of Christ which lead to salvation? I am to work out my salvation with fear and trembling. I have to be blameless and innocent, a child of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shining out among them like bright stars in the world; (Phil.2:15).

I am not to live any kind of life that suits me, but to lead others to righteousness. As a magnet attracts objects to itself, so also my life should attract people to Christ. This is what Daniel was told, that “those who lead many to justice shall be like the stars forever”. Evil shall be defeated; good shall triumph at the end of time, so what am I doing to win? The word of God should be a lamp for my feet and a light for my path; (Ps.119:105). I have to persevere in my faith, try to do good always and not to be tired of it; I have to be honest and sincere with whatever I do, and ask God to give me the grace to avoid evil.