

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

“May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you,” prays the psalmist. Kindness seems in short supply when we listen to the news these days. But when we unplug the mass media and look around us, we see acts of kindness and solidarity all around us. When confronted with violence and evil, instead of responding in kind, let us respond with kindness.

We hear so much about what divides us in our nation and our world. Christian faith calls and challenges us to build bonds of solidarity and understanding that ignorance and hatred cannot destroy. Pope Leo XIV also said this recently, so I am in good company!

Another reality is death, illness, or tragedy. You and I are sometimes caught off guard, unprepared. Being clueless is one thing.

But sometimes we know better and still fail to take responsibility for the obligations that are ours. What Jesus teaches today pivots on three ideas: suddenness, accountability, and responsibility.

*Sudden:* because we can't put our death on the calendar for future reference. As a kid, I often prayed the Lord to tell me my date of death, so I could plan my life accordingly. He never told me!

*Accountable:* because our lives don't belong to us, we're merely stewards of our time, our talents and our treasures, and God alone will judge the quality and generosity of our stewardship.

*Responsible:* because what we do on this earth, every decision, matters. What we do and fail to do, as we say at Mass. It won't do us any good to claim we didn't know, we weren't expecting this. That,

with more time or a little advance warning, we could have done something together. Too late for that.

Treat every interaction with your fellow human beings as if it's the last, with all the tenderness and kind attention you daydream of bestowing on those around your deathbed. Make your last words to each other tender and kind. If you hope to be a saint one day, be a saint today. If you intend to forgive someone eventually, forgive him or her now. Christian death is easy. Why?

Because if you die to yourself in every minute, and you've got it made. After Jesus has preached, has spoken this parable, 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 sinners! Surely not us! Right?"

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. That line has always scared me. Because the Lord indeed has given me much!

Since it is the living Word, active and alive, it is directed at you and me as well. We also know the will of God through Jesus Christ. We have the sacraments, we have the Scriptures and we have the teachings of the Church. You and I have been given much, so much will be expected.

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, our 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 in America when they pounded that gold spike at Promontory Point in Utah Territory that joined the western coast and eastern coast railroads on May 10, 1869

When I saw my great-grandfather's tombstone at Sacred Heart of St. Mary Cemetery in Detroit, 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 left Poland and came to America, before he could open his mouth, my Mom blurted out: “Because they were being chased out of the country 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 live by our own rules and regulations, our own fictitious truth? Is our parish a place where Jesus Christ is welcome? 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 welcome?

Questions to ponder: 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? The reward, if we’re ready, is the greatest wedding we’ll ever attend: the heavenly Supper of the Lamb. AMEN!