

## Homily Year 34 B - November 18, 2018

The end is coming! The world as we know it will be gone! The signs are all around us. Be careful! Doom and gloom constitute the two operative words when we hear or speak about the end of time. The gospel abounds with that language.

But why does Jesus use that language about the moon and the stars, about fig trees, about the powers of heaven. Well, the answer is really quite simple. At the time of Jesus, people used those elements and images to tell time, to predict the weather. They definitely did not have satellite technology, no accuweather, no atomic clocks, and not even a Timex to tell time - just the natural elements.

Frankly, all of this language and these images do not phase me in the least. The only important end in my book is Robert Aucoin's end. Each one of you probably has a similar book of life wondering when it will end.

Admittedly, we do not like speaking or even listening about the topic. However, the experience of death will affect every person in this church. No one escapes death.

So, ultimately, the question for each one of us is: Am I looking forward to my end of the world, or am I afraid of my end of the world, or would I rather not talk about my end of the world? Let's look at these options.

How about looking forward to death? Do you think about your death every day? Well, you should. Looking forward does not necessarily mean being happy about it. Rather, looking forward means forward looking, realizing, first of all, that it is going to happen and, secondly, that I must be prepared for it. No matter what health program I am following, no matter which guru I turn to for advice, no matter exercise regime I am engaged in, I will die. So, how do we prepare? Well, Jesus provides the pathway that we must follow. There really is no other.

Jesus living embodiment is the Church. Well, you may say "the Church"??!! That's rather scary given the situations that that we read or hear about each day. Well, the Church is a divine institution formed with human beings with Christ as the head. Individuals are not perfect. The Church as established by Christ is his living body, but there are imperfect individuals in that Church even individuals who have violated sacred trusts. The Church remains the body of Christ despite the imperfections in that body.

We prepare for death by being faithful disciples of Jesus in and through his Church. When we deviate from the body of Christ, then we are making up our own religion and can ultimately do whatever we want.

What about the fear of death? We can conquer this real and legitimate fear through faith and trying to discover the roots of our fear. Infidelity or indifference towards God can legitimately lead to fear of death. However, God can easily cure this fear through his mercy, the mercy that is especially found in the sacrament of reconciliation. Confession is good for the soul because it removes the cause of our fear - our poor relationship with God.

Then, there are those who avoid the topic of death and want to only engage in happy talk. Unfortunately, I would count them among the clueless. Their avoidance of reality, especially the reality of death, will not erase the reality of death. If you find yourself in this latter category, get a grip and face the reality of death and prepare for it. You don't want to be caught out in the cold.

The words of Jesus should awaken a part of human reality that we do not often dwell on. Our best solution is to face death with eyes wide open. These wide open eyes, focused on faith, will help us see and appreciate the world around us with all its wonder, and we will look forward to the world beyond us with wonder beyond all imagination.