
18 Sunday

33rd SUNDAY of Ordinary Time

Daniel 12: 1 - 3
Ps 15: 5, 8 - 11
Hebrews 10: 11-14, 18
Mark 13: 24 - 32

Coming towards the end of the year, today's liturgy readings (St Mark's gospel and the prophet Daniel) remind us of the "end times". They picture the distressing signs and portents that will herald those times of great change. And Jesus tells us to learn to 'read' those signs, just as we learn the signs of seasons and changes in the natural world around us.

Exactly 50 years ago the first session of the Second Vatican Council was taking place. A popular phrase emerged from the Council's work and discussions, about recognizing "the signs of the times". It was a call for the church to become more sensitive to the changing world we live in, and especially to learn from our world. That was a novel idea for a church long more accustomed to being in command and being suspicious of the world. It was a call to be more aware of the world's cares and concerns, peoples' ordinary needs, desires, fears, and to be involved in these issues.

These days, people are much concerned about global warming, climate change, rapid and unusual weather changes, economic downturns, social problems of many kinds. How do we "read" these signs and the changes that are going on? What's their influence on my personal, social and Christian life? How should I respond, in faith, in charity, and maybe most especially in hope? How share my hope in Christ with people who are fearful for the future, afraid of change? But all life is change, and everything will change, be transformed, and pass away. Only His words will not pass away