

## **Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mark 13:24-32

God lives in eternity. God experiences everything at once and simultaneously acts upon everything. Every moment in time and every point in space is always equally present to God...sort of like how an ant crawls along the ground and can only see an inch in front of itself, and we can see the whole yard, all at once. For God, the beginning of the universe and the end and this moment right now and Eve eating the fruit and Jesus dying on the Cross and Jesus rising from the dead and Jesus born in Bethlehem, are all happening right now.

It is impossible to imagine what that is like. We live in time and we cannot imagine life without time. The closest we can come is the moment. We imagine one moment in time, and that is the closest we can come to imagining eternity. It is different because for us a moment takes place in a particular location and before we can really do anything, the moment has passed. We are limited; God is not. We have something more though...we have the present moment, the endless stream of moments. When we choose to patiently participate in the present moment we come as close to sharing in eternity as we can.

For a little while now, try to live completely in the present moment. Forget everything that has happened up to this point. Forget everything that will happen or that needs to happen. Forget how you got here today, and forget the balance in your bank account. For a little while, let go of everything you are trying to keep in balance. Like yesterday never happened, and tomorrow never will happen. Like this morning never happened, and this afternoon never will happen. As if you were created a second ago, fully-formed, here in this space, without any plans or worries, nowhere to go afterward, nothing to do but to be here.

It is very difficult to maintain that experience of the present without “real life” creeping in from every side. Which is more real: that you are here now or what you might be doing an hour from now? We can't live our lives without doing something, and acting in the present moment requires remembering the past and thinking about the future. Our memory and our imagination allow us to imitate the unlimited nature of God in our limited way. Sitting here in this place, we can remember and imagine all the other places in the world, and important things that have happened, and commitments that we have made. In order to decide what I should do right now, I have to think about what I want to be doing in an hour and in a year and in ten years. If I want to be eating dinner in an hour, then I have to start cooking.

If we want to succeed at life, we always have to be thinking about where we want to be in the future and then act accordingly in the present. That is part of growing up. Only children get to live in the moment without considering the consequences or the planning for how they will achieve their goals. Hopefully, prayer is a time for each of us when we can live in the moment...like Eucharist on Sunday and some other time every day when we can drop out of the world and imitate the eternity of God.

But prayer is also a time of remembering and planning. We remember all the people and situations that we need to pray for. We remember the mystery of Faith: how Christ died and rose again. And instead of planning where we will be in one year or even ten years, we think about where we will be in the forever time of eternity.

We know about Jesus. But we would still be surprised to see him coming down through the clouds. Every year around this time we read the promise of Jesus to come back someday, but do we act like we believe it? He left the time uncertain because we need it that way. If people in the past had known that he still would not be back in the year 2015, and if we knew that he will not be back for another thousand years, the urgency would be completely gone. As it is, he may very well come back this afternoon, for all we know.

The point is that, in every present moment, somewhere between figuring out how to get all the bills paid and deciding what to make for dinner tonight, we should leave a little corner of our mind for this promise, knowing that it could happen at any time. This truth, this promise, changes how we calculate everything. Sure, save for retirement, make sure that you have enough socked away; but, you know, Jesus might come between now and then. Work for that promotion, have a ten-year plan at work, but Jesus might come before you get there. Buy the groceries for Thanksgiving dinner, but Jesus might come on Wednesday. If he does, you will not need the groceries or the plans or the 401k. **If he does, the only balances that will count for anything are the number of people in need whom we helped, the number of sinners whom we brought back to the faith, how many people we forgave and how sorry we are for our sins, and how much we love God. What is valuable now will be worthless then, and what is worthless now will be our only asset then.**

When we gather as a community we are an integrated whole rather than separate parts...one family instead of 188+ individual families. Together, we need to shine our light so brightly that everyone who crosses our path can't help but notice the inner joy that comes from a relationship with Jesus. We need to reach to family

members, friends and co-workers. We must also reach out beyond the boundaries of QAC – to make sure we share Christ’s light with all those God happens to put in our lives, like fellow grocery shoppers, fast food workers, wait persons, the mail carrier, and even that grumpy neighbor next door with the mean, barking dogs. And remember, sometimes actions speak louder than words!

So, when we go home, bloom where we are planted. The message that ‘**each one of us is a member of God's family**’ is as much needed where you came from as it is here. “We must do small things with great love.”...said Saint Teresa. This week why not see how many times we ourselves can bring Jesus back to earth? **A Persian proverb says:** "I sought my God; my God I could not see. I sought my soul; my soul eluded me. I sought my neighbor, and I found all three." Let **us** become God's miracle for somebody today!

Deacon Greg Cecere

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(with excerpts from Deacon Greg Kandra & Fr. James Gilhooley)