

STAND UP STRAIGHT AND SAISE YOUR HEADS

Luke 21:20-28

Today's gospel is dark and conveying a feeling of sadness. There is a bringing together of two events: the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man. One happens within history, the other marks the end of history. Jesus is fully aware of the horrors of war, especially how the innocent and vulnerable suffer. The Second Coming will be announced by strange cosmic happenings. These will cause terror and confusion among all earth's peoples.

The Gospel today contains a truth that we badly need to be reminded of - that we are all dependent on the plans and will of God. As Advent approaches, Pope Francis reminds us that in the next four weeks 'we do not just live in anticipation of Christmas; we are also called to rekindle the anticipation of the glorious return of Christ — when he will return at the end of time — preparing ourselves, with consistent and courageous choices, for the final encounter with him. We remember Christmas, we await the glorious return of Christ, and also our personal encounter: the day in which the Lord will call.'

This year, things seem to be falling apart in so many ways; economically, socially and spiritually. Jesus is equally aware of the horrors of the worldwide COVID 19 pandemic. Believers need have no fear. Experiences which we have little or no control, can leave us deeply shaken. But in those crises when we are most aware of our frailty the Lord is always near. Our risen saviour gives strength in our weakness. He can dissolve our fears and stiffen our resolve to "stand erect with heads held high." Whenever we are overshadowed by darkness we need to hang on tightly, for the light of God shines on and the darkness will not overcome it.