

Homily: 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: 2023: Cycle A: Prov 31; Ps. 128; 1 Thes 5: 1-6; Mt. 25: 14-30

***“The Day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night”***

1. **The message today from the Lord** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and the Gospel is: Don't get spiritually complacent! Re-prioritize now and go deeper in your Faith before it's too late! We must prepare ourselves daily for the Lord's coming - whether it be His second coming at the end of the world, or the second coming for us personally, which is when we die: as the Catechism of the Catholic Church states it: *“Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of Heaven - after a purification, (i.e., **Purgatory** if our souls are not perfectly purified of sin and the effects of sin by penance/self-denial in this life); or immediately into **Heaven** (if we die a saint), - or into immediate and everlasting damnation, i.e., **Hell** (if there is unrepented mortal sin on our souls at the time of death). ‘In the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love’ (St. John of the Cross in the CCC, 1022).”* No loneliness in the grave!
2. **How do we prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming**, so that we will be found in His love in the evening of life, and not be caught off guard? **Daily prayer:** that means developing a personal relationship of conversing with the Lord in good times and bad, not simply reading and reciting prayers; that's a good beginning, but the Holy Spirit wants to take us from infancy to adulthood in the spiritual life. Are we generous enough with God concerning our time and energy to allow that to happen? **Penance:** do we daily offer our sufferings, be they mental, spiritual, emotional, or physical in reparation for our sins and those of the whole world? Are we willing to engage daily in voluntary mortification of some sort, e.g., denying ourselves things we really like: extra sleep, food, drink, television, sports etc. to help us die to sin and live for God? **Confession:** when is the last time we made a really good honest confession of ALL of our sins? Has it been years? Or have we ever done that in our life? **Acts of charity/self-giving:** in relation to God and neighbor, how much are we really doing of the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy? If you don't know what they are, look them up and try to do some of

them on a regular basis. **We are supposed to be children of the light, not spiritually asleep** like the rest, as St. Paul says (we see this so much today with Hollywood and Politicians scandals). For this awakening to occur we must ask the Lord to form our minds and hearts in His holy will, so we will have a spiritual mind and not be spiritually blind. Meditating on **the Last Things**: *death, judgment, purgatory, heaven and hell* helps - put this life in proper perspective.

3. **Truly the charm of this life and the beauty of this world are fleeting** (see the aging process of ppl) as the first reading from Proverbs points out, but the eternal love and beauty of God and His kingdom are everlasting. **What is our heart set on in all honesty**: the things of God: holiness and goodness; or the things of this world: power, money, prestige and sinful pleasure? **Where our heart is, there will our treasure be found, for good or bad**. The Gospel today reminds us that the talents God has blessed us with are meant to be used to serve: God and others - not our own selfish ends. All the various gifts and knowledge that we possess as human beings are for a definite purpose: *not for vanity, not for the praise of others, not for our own selfish gain, but rather for the good of our souls and to help others to get to Heaven in charity*. **How are we cooperating with the Holy Spirit in that regard?** St. John reminds us in his first letter that if we claim to love God then we can't merely say it with our lips, but must show it in our actions (see **1 John 3: 18, 24**). *And He who loves the Lord keeps His commandments* (**1 John 5: 3**). **Remember the standard of love by which are lives are judged in the end is not our own or the world's but God's!** By cooperating generously with the Holy Spirit, He will form us into the image of Christ crucified in this life through the mystery of the Cross, then we will be found *in His love in the evening of life* (St. John of the Cross) We will then enter into the gift of the Resurrection in the eternal kingdom of light - not the kingdom of darkness! God bless you.

**Recommended reading:**

***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***. Paragraphs 988-1050. Doubleday 1997. Or online at <https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/>

**Life Everlasting**. Fr. Reginald Garrigou La-Grange. TAN Books. 1991. This is a great book on the last things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell and Purgatory.