

HOMILY SUNDAY 33 – B (Homily 02)\*

“Shining Like Stars”

(Daniel 12:1-3; Ps 16; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mk 13:24-32)

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A particular grandmother spent a lot of time each day reading her bible. Her grandson commented to a friend that she was cramming for her finals.

Who was the most positive influence in your life?

As we come to the end of the liturgical year, we are invited to be ready for our own finals; to live holy lives of faith, hope and love so we can shine like stars.

The first reading speaks to us of resurrection and righteousness. This passage is one of the key OT texts about the resurrection. This is the first clear biblical reference to a resurrection, final judgment and afterlife. This passage raises the question of resurrection, to eternal life or to condemnation. The wise will shine, and those who helped others lead a righteous life will also shine. So the person that we thought of, who had the most positive influence in our lives, is also shining now in God’s sight.

The Gospel calls us to live in readiness, serving and holy. We are to be the elect of Jesus. He will come again to gather his elect. We must be ready, for no one knows the time or the hour. Regarding the time of his coming, the New Interpreter’s Bible has this comment: The basic truth is that the death and resurrection of Jesus has ushered in the last age. In Jesus, God has spoken the final word - there remains only the consummation. God’s definitive act was the sending of his son; the coming of that Son will signal the close of salvation history. Death will be our *parousia* when we meet the Son of Man and hope to stand with the elect.

The Christian community must be like a doorkeeper, always vigilant and never complacent in their authority and service. We must live life in constant expectation and readiness to meet the Son of Man. Mark is preparing his disciples to endure and accept the trials and tribulations of the present, as a share in Jesus suffering, buoyed up by the hope they have of Jesus coming and the way he endured these trials. They will be disciples of which Jesus will not be ashamed.

The second reading from Hebrews reminds us that Jesus has freed us from sin, so we must live free from sin. We know that no human effort or sacrifice can take away sin. Jesus' own sacrifice for all time took away sin, perfected us and brought about forgiveness. Jesus now waits for his enemies to become his footstool. Our response must be to place our sin and sinfulness at his feet, to receive his forgiveness and healing, to become holy, single-minded in his service, free from sin and addiction, and to live in his glory.

Someone who had a very positive influence on my life is Archbishop Emeritus Adam Exner, former bishop of Kamloops, Winnipeg and finally Vancouver before he retired. As a spiritual director in Battleford, he had a constant stream of people coming to him for advice. As my spiritual director, he was the first one to hear my story, discern my need to work on my relationship with a member of my family, and suggested that I spend a month praying only with Isaiah 43:1-7, words that I dearly needed to hear at that stage of my life. At certain times later on in my ministry, especially in moments of personal crisis, he would listen to me and invariably come up with precisely the words that I needed to hear at that time. Would that we could all be as positive an influence on others as he was to so many.

So to summarize the readings today, we are to be wise; we are to become the elect of the Son of Man; we are to receive and live the forgiveness of God through faith in Christ. We will then shine like stars brighter than day, and be a positive influence on others, leading them to righteousness.

The Eucharist that we celebrate now is our table fellowship with the Lord, calling us to walk with God in faith and love, and to be a positive influence on others.

So let us always be ready for the finals, by walking with our God and living holy lives of faith, hope and love.