



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY November 18 & BEYOND”

“When Nothing’s Left”



If anyone from Paradise, CA, were to hear the gospel lesson that will be read in All Saints’ this coming Sunday, my guess is that they would end up in tears in the pew. If you’ve been following the California wildfire news at all in the last week or so, you know that Paradise --- and how strange a juxtaposition is this – was the epicenter of hell on earth. The entire town wiped out by fire in a very, very short period of time. I’ve just heard today that the Episcopal Church, St. Nicholas, and the Lutheran church across the street are both intact. There’s not much else left

standing in town, with 6000 structures demolished. Buildings with block wall construction have walls still standing, but the entire contents demolished. People’s homes burned right down to the ground. And so precious little warning – folks talking on the phone to alarmed family and neighbors, looking out their kitchen windows and seeing the fire – licking at their redwood decks. So, no time to grab anything, just “get out!”

Let me share the reading with you here:

Jesus said, "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not be in winter. For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be." (Mark 13:14-23)

Of course, Jesus is speaking as prophet about what will be happening at the end of the world as we know it. What Jesus is speaking to has not yet happened. But those words will be extremely hard to hear by those who have lost everything **RIGHT NOW**. The emotional impact will be the same. What words will follow that can possibly provide some sense of comfort and good news for that current pain?

That's not an easy question to answer. For some in such pain, no consoling will be acceptable despite the best and sincerest and most empathetic of personal ministry. Perhaps you've been in such a situation yourself? How did you get through it? Or have you? Read on, perhaps how others get through pain may be helpful for you.

So, for some, just being in church, the fellowship of the saints gathered around, will be of such a great surrounding comfort that hope can begin to emerge, even if only a mustard seed to begin. For some, knowing the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed sacrament of Holy Communion will provide a certainty that God has not left them, but is with them. They will find strength, thus, to return to the scene, and begin a new discipline of normalcy.

And some will hear the words of Jesus as the gospel reading continues on from the prophesied devastation and begin to see a new reality: they are alive. And for that they take the words of Paul to heart and know that thanksgiving to God is to be uttered in every situation.

Jesus continued to speak, "And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days."

I am reminded of the testimonies of so many who have come through disastrous situations only to question why they are alive and well, and so many others died, or were consumed in disaster in other ways. It can actually cause deep depression. And there are the testimonies of those who have found new purpose in their lives to make something of their lives that they hadn't conceived of before. And there are those who simply became aware that life and death are so very fragile, but that God is the God of both the dead and the living, and now is the day of life, living, sharing, comforting, thanksgiving, building, loving. And there is a strange and mysterious, yet profound comfort knowing that these things have been spoken of before, these things that happen to us now, and things to come. They have not been spoken of by just any one – they have been spoken to us by the God of all Creation, and by His Son Jesus Christ, whose purpose in coming once, and again, is to save us.

And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There he is!'--do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be alert; I (Jesus) have already told you everything."

When disaster strikes, turn your eyes to Jesus. He is the author and perfecter of our Faith. Through his words, through his action on our behalf, through his knowledge of things now and to come, and through the encouragement he provides through His Body, that association of all his followers, we will find comfort and eternal life.

Pray for those whose lives have been devastated.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Daniel 12:1-4a Psalm 16:5-11 Hebrews 10:31-39 Mark 13:14-23

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

9:00a – 4:00p Fall Holiday Arts & Crafts Show and Sale with Music
Parish Hall and Courtyard

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SATURDAY 7:00pm Willan West 2018 Celebration
Solemn High Mass – St. Gregory, the Wonder Worker
Willan Collective (choir), Director, Dr. Ruben Valenzuela