

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME–2022

One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of Chicken Little to her class. She came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tried to warn the farmer. She read, "... and so Chicken Little went up to the farmer and said, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!" The teacher paused then asked the class, "And what do you think that farmer said?" One little girl raised her hand and said, "I think he said: 'Holy Cow! A talking chicken!'"

In the early days of the Church, even though Jesus said no one knows when it will happen, it was generally thought that the second coming of Jesus Christ, along with the end the world, was going to happen soon. Even in the early letters of St. Paul, we hear him talk about the end coming soon. In a one place he even encourages people not to get married so that they wouldn't be caught up with all the distractions that come with family life. However, as time goes on, Paul realizes that it ain't going to happen soon.

In the second reading today, Paul has to admonish some of the people who were kind of just hanging around, waiting for it all to happen. Some stopped working and became a burden for others, needing to be taken care of. To them he says, if you don't work, then go hungry. And without anything to do, they started minding other people's business and all that goes along with that. Thank God we don't have to worry about that here. Anyway, Paul basically says, get back to work and do what you are used to doing. Do your job. Do what is required of you so that you can make a contribution to the common good. That is the best way to get ready for the future encounter with the Lord, whether it be at the end of world or at the end of our time here on earth.

By his becoming one of us, Jesus sanctified our humanity and our ordinariness. He shows us that God and our salvation are found in the ordinary things and people of every day. And so our every day is the temple; our hearts, homes, places of work, etc, are now the holy of holies. The eternal is already a part of our lives; we are, in one sense, already sharing in that everlasting life. While we don't become overly attached to the present and the things of this world, it is in the stuff of our everyday that we will find our happiness.

In the Gospel today, through the use of a lot of imagery, Jesus talks about all the difficult things that we will have to face if we want to be his disciples. In the early days of the Church, Christians were handed over to the authorities by family members; they did so in order to save their own lives. Actually, to be a Christian was a crime. His disciples were not to worry about what to say. He says, just be my loyal and faithful disciple; just be my faithful friend. The love

that Jesus has for his disciples and the love that the disciple has for Jesus will be the force behind the spoken words. So the disciples are not to prepare what they are to say, they are to just be themselves and to live open to the present moment.

What about us who are called to be disciples and friends of the Lord? While we won't be handed over to the authorities, if we are faithful to our calling then we will all have to face difficult things from time to time: setbacks, losses, misunderstandings, lack of appreciation and inclusion, people who don't like us; people who don't like the changes we make; people who watch our every move like the pharisees watched Jesus. Sometimes even in our families, among friends, and, yes, even in church, there are those difficult heart-wrenching situations that hurt so much. Jesus says to us, that we need to face these things courageously, patiently, compassionately, and confident that, if we persevere things will eventually all work out, for those who remain faithful to the Kingdom.

What is this Kingdom of God all about? It's about all of us doing our part to make it more visible and to bring about fulfillment. We do this today and every day. We get up in the morning, we face and accept our responsibilities, we go to work or to school, we pray. We put up with all the irritations and challenges that make up a part of each day when we live and work with people. We try to make sure that we don't become discouraged or give ourselves over to sadness, anger, cynicism, sarcasm or resentment. At the end of each day, we give thanks; we go to bed and we do the same thing again the next day. Each day is new and full of opportunities if we are open to see them. This is how we live in the Kingdom of God, remembering the specialness of each moment, place and person. This is how we seek first the Kingdom of God.