

Mass for the healing of the victims of crimes
November 17, 2012
Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

Do the words of the gospel unsettle us? (Mk. 13.24-32) The Lord Jesus presents a cosmic cataclysm where all that we know will tremble and vanish. Are we shaken by the vision? Do we fear these words or do we dare put our trust in those words the Lord say will not pass away? Consider this.

In the Third Eucharistic Prayer, the priest prays to God, "As we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice."

For the memorial acclamation, the assembly will often profess, "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again."

Following the recitation of the Our Father, the priest speaks to our heavenly Father saying, "We await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ."

During the Our Father, together we all pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

These are aspirations and expectations we customarily invoke and routinely recite. How sincere is our hope that they will occur, that they will come? How serious is our faith in the second coming of Christ?

Christianity has a history of those who have fixed a date and feverishly made preparations for the rapture only to be left standing while the rest of world went about their business. Does the seeming folly of some makes us timid about even hoping for his coming?

Our hesitation may suggest not the fear of his coming but the doubt that he may not. Is there a God that will come? If there is, then why would he come? Why should that matter to me? Does the Lord know what I have suffered? Does he care about what my family has endured? In the gospel of Luke, the Lord Jesus does not doubt his return in glory. In preparing his disciples for that day he questions them, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk. 18.8)

If the gospel's prophecies are a foretelling of future events then it is more or less a dramatic scriptural weather report. The Lord Jesus is not speaking of events. He is proposing an encounter, a personal encounter between us and the Lord. When the Lord comes, he comes for us. He comes to find us, to heal us, to save us.

We have begun the Year of Faith, declared so by our Holy Father, Benedict XVI. Does our faith consist of a package of beliefs, customs and traditions? Do we believe in God or do we believe in a God who knows us, loves us, and longingly looks for us?

We remember in this Mass those of you and many others who have suffered the ravages of violence, the horror that lingers to haunt us and wound us. The mechanism of human justice

can falter in hearing or healing the destruction of lives and the damaged soul. The Lord knows this. The Lord Jesus sees this. He tells us in gospel, “Know that he is near.”

The Eucharist we celebrate is filled with apocalyptic references that prepare our heart and attune our souls to his coming. Besides those which I have mentioned there is one more such moment, a more personal moment.

The priest lifts us the host prior to the communion procession. He calls out to the assembly saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” These words are taken both from the gospel according to John and the Book of the Apocalypse. In the gospel, John the Baptist reveals to his disciples the Lord Jesus who humbly approaches them on road. In the Book of Apocalypse, the Lamb of God is revealed to the throng of humanity gathered for the final judgment. Two very different versions of the one encounter with the Lord who comes for us. So we open our hands and our hearts to him now and for eternity as we say: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”