

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 34th Week of Ordinary Time- Year 1**

**St Peter's 8:30 AM & 7:00 PM Mass - November 26, 2019**

**Daniel 2:3,9,10,27,31-45** "God's kingdom shall crush all others and shall stand forever."

**Daniel 3:57-61** "Sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever."

**Luke 21:5-11** "The day will come when not one stone will be left on another. Do not to be led astray."

### **True Wisdom - True Authority**

#### **Introduction**

From a religious point of view, there are two kinds of king. There are those kings who understand that all authority comes from God and that, like every other gift or privilege, they are only the caretakers of that authority. In the books of the kings of Israel, it says that this kind of king "did what was right in the sight of the Lord." The other kind of king is one who uses his power and authority as if it belongs to him, the so called 'divine right of kings'. The Books of Kings identify them as those who "did evil in the sight of the Lord." Unfortunately, there are a relatively small number in the first group.

While we don't have too many kings in our experience today, there are many who have authority, prime ministers and presidents and even those who manage people in businesses and other organizations who fall into those categories.

Where I worked at the City of Calgary, there was a new manager after the previous one had been there for a long time. He was evaluating everything that went on and almost everyone was grumbling and anxious about changes that appeared to be coming. In a meeting of our whole group, employees were questioning this process until the new manager, clearly frustrated, blurted out, "Look, the king is dead. Long live the king. Get used to it." That changed everyone's attitude. He was right, we realized. He is the new manager and will do things his way.

## Daniel

This passage from Daniel is rich with images of true authority. Through it, we can perceive what is true wisdom. Nebuchadnezzar was not a king of Israel but the Babylonian king that God was using to lead his people back to himself. To the king God gave authority to lead his people - away from the promised land, away from the temple they loved, into a time of reflection about all the ways they had abandoned God. In his God-given wisdom - true wisdom - Daniel recognized God's authority in that earthly king: "You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory." That is amazing language.

So, this king had a dream. The king knows that his dream has great significance and he wants to be sure he understands it correctly. That is why he demands that whoever is going to interpret it must have almost divine knowledge. But the sages recognize their limitations: "There is no one **on earth** who can reveal what the king demands." Finally, though, they call Daniel, the Israelite who has long been recognized to have this divine insight.

Daniel tells the king his dream about the huge and terrifyingly brilliant statue with a head of gold, chest of silver, thighs of bronze, then iron, then iron mixed with clay. Each of these are symbols of earthly kingdoms, earthly authority, all of which are smashed by a single stone. They are broken into pieces and disappear entirely before the stone, "which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth ... and shall last forever."

This interpretation has divine, not human authority behind it, as Daniel explains: "The great God has informed the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation trustworthy."

## Luke

We are on the threshold of the time of preparation for the coming of the Messiah once more. Those who question Jesus are asking for true wisdom from the one who has true authority to interpret what is to come. The gold of the temple, and even its beautiful stones, will be overcome by the one whom we call the stone the

builders rejected, the cornerstone of our faith. Luke records Jesus, who is the source of the divine authority, who is the fulfilment of history and the culmination of human destiny.

Jesus is foretelling the coming devastation of Jerusalem, which was confirmed a generation later, using old testament images. The Romans did, indeed, trample the city and the temple in 70 AD.

There has never been a time in human history when wars, earthquakes, famines and plagues have not been a part of the picture. Since any one of these events and phenomena can occur without warning or notice, it is better to be prepared, and preparation consists in always looking for Christ in every person and circumstance.

Despite the wars and the many signs that our human made temples are in danger, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid!" That stuff is going to happen. Stay faithful to the Son of Man who will come in true glory. Everything we build will pass away. The foundation stones of our own life need to be built on the hope of what is permanent and truly holy.

What an exciting time as we approach the Advent season, where we watch and listen and wait in anticipation of the coming fresh into our lives the true wisdom of God and the source and manifestation of all true authority. With Daniel, we can say that he is trustworthy.