

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

### St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Nov 27, 2018

**Rev 14: 14-19** "The hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe."

**Psalm 96: 10-13** "The Lord is coming to judge the world with righteousness."

**Luke 21: 5-11** "The days will come when not one stone will be left upon another."

#### Introduction

It was a photo of Pope St. John Paul which caused a yearning in my heart to go to that place. He was visiting Jerusalem and, while there, went to the only remaining part of the temple of Jesus' day, the foundation, now called the Western Wall. One photo was of him putting into one of the cracks between the stones a folded piece of paper with a prayer written on it. That's a Jewish tradition, still frequently practiced there. Another photo was of him just lightly leaning his forehead against the stone, a beautiful image of prayer for peace in that troubled place.

#### The Temple

It is no longer adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God. It is a remnant, a reminder of the place where God dwelled with his people, although even that temple was viewed with a certain ambivalence, a mix of feelings. Jesus' words about its destruction within a generation could easily have prompted the peoples' conscious memory of the fact that Solomon's original temple had already been totally destroyed once, by the Babylonians.

And, when they had rebuilt it after the exile, their resources were limited and the Ark of the Covenant was lost, (not to be rediscovered until Harrison Ford, as Indiana Jones came along). But, at the rededication ceremony at that time, the people cried sad tears because it was such a pathetic version of its original glory.

Then, in Jesus' time, the so called Herod the Great had given the temple a major facelift, providing it with those beautiful jewels and many adornments and massive stones. But he was Rome's agent, trying to gain favour with the Jewish people, so that was an extremely mixed blessing.

## **Two Prophecies ...**

Perhaps these are some of the things on their minds when they ask him when it will happen and what will be the signs. Jesus' response was to issue a prediction. It is meant to be taken literally. Don't go depending too much on the temple. Despite its indestructible appearance, it will, indeed, be destroyed.

We often get confused about what Jesus is referring to here. There are two separate events overlaid, one on top of the other. The destruction of the temple is also to be understood as a preview of the events of the end times, of chaos followed by judgment. And, there would be a long period of time between those two events.

## **... and a Warning**

So, Jesus' warning is very relevant for us. We still have a great curiosity about end times. How will we know and what will be the signs? Everywhere around us, there seem to be signs of a coming reckoning. Everywhere, there seems to be, not a movement to a higher state of evolving consciousness, but of disharmony and war, of self styled messiahs, prophets saying "Listen to me and you will be happy. Follow my plan for your self improvement."

In this context we hear Jesus say, "Beware that you are not led astray!" He also says that, despite the wars and the many signs that our human made temples are in danger, "Do not be afraid!" That stuff is going to happen. Stay faithful to the Son of Man who will come on the clouds in true glory.

Why is 'fake news' such a big deal in our time? Isn't it because we desperately want to know what is true, what to believe, who and what to follow? Don't we feel insecure in some way when we are lied to? I thought I could trust this news source. I followed that public figure on Twitter or Facebook. And when those supposed 'sources of truth' prove hollow or untrustworthy, the world offers me escapes- all kinds of them.

## **Call To Action**

I did get to pray at that wall where St. John Paul prayed. And, I wasn't disappointed. There was something about it that moved me to want to go back again and again. There was just something. Maybe it was because of the many people praying there. Maybe it was because there was no illusion of a kind of glory created by human hands and ingenuity. There was only that stark reminder that everything we build will pass away; That the foundation stones of our own life need to be built on the hope of what is permanent and truly holy.

We do have our churches, with their sanctuaries, their holy places around the altar. Ultimately, though, what we have is the true and trustworthy foundation stone, the Real Presence of God, before which we fall to our knees in worship. If we do this often enough and sincerely enough, we will not be troubled by fake news. We will not need to run after those who say "I am he". We will have the only peace that can exist right in the middle of the chaos and lies. We will have Jesus ... the Christ ... the Son of the living and true God.