

*The Lord's Commands at the end of Ordinary Time*

Homily for November 27, 2021

Christ the King issued three commands in this final Gospel of the season of Ordinary Time: Beware, be vigilant, and pray. The first commands us to beware of carousing, drunkenness, and anxiety, which can result in drowsy hearts. We have the Catechism to elaborate on what happens if we fall into grave sins: "Mortal sin...results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's Kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back." (CCC 1861). Jesus' admonition to "beware" is the most loving message he can give us, for his heart's desire is that we spend eternity with the Father in Heaven.

It can be all too easy to grow lax and negligent, especially when we look forward to family gatherings over the holidays. Our schedules change, we celebrate with food and drink, and we see more family and friends than usual. To be vigilant is to be alert, attentive, and on guard over our souls. Vigilance begins with a good examination of conscience to discern what God is asking of us. Then we lean on the grace of God to guard against temptation so that we can act prudently and charitably to carry out his will.

"Pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man." Alone we are weak; with God we can do all things. This is why prayer is so important; it places us in a right relationship to God, the source of grace and life and strength. Without him, we are small and helpless; the tribulations wash over and destroy us, just as the waves destroy the house built on sand. When we do not pray, we are telling God that we think we can manage things without him. When we pray we are placing all our confidence in him. When we pray, love replaces fear or drowsiness in our hearts. Hope grows so that we can be confident that we will one day stand before the Son of Man when he comes at the end of time.

Lord, we thank you for the year 2021. Today by your grace we ask for the grace to live this upcoming Advent season well.

Lord Jesus, I desire to keep you company, to watch and pray with you. This is prayer: rousing my heart from earthly concerns to simply be with you. Teach me to obey your commands and thereby save myself much grief, for I know you always want the best for me. Christ Our King, Thy Kingdom Come!