

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel:

Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: "In your vision, O king, you saw a statue, very large and exceedingly bright, terrifying in appearance as it stood before you. The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs bronze, the legs iron, its feet partly iron and partly tile. While you looked at the statue, a stone which was hewn from a mountain without a hand being put to it, struck its iron and tile feet, breaking them in pieces. The iron, tile, bronze, silver, and gold all crumbled at once, fine as the chaff on the threshing floor in summer, and the wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. "This was the dream; the interpretation we shall also give in the king's presence. You, O king, are the king of kings; to you the God of heaven has given dominion and strength, power and glory; men, wild beasts, and birds of the air, wherever they may dwell, he has handed over to you, making you ruler over them all; you are the head of gold. Another kingdom shall take your place, inferior to yours, then a third kingdom, of bronze, which shall rule over the whole earth. There shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron; it shall break in pieces and subdue all these others, just as iron breaks in pieces and crushes everything else. The feet and toes you saw, partly of potter's tile and partly of iron, mean that it shall be a divided kingdom, but yet have some of the hardness of iron. As you saw the iron mixed with clay tile, and the toes partly iron and partly tile, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. The iron mixed with clay tile means that they shall seal their alliances by intermarriage, but they shall not stay united, any more than iron mixes with clay. In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever. That is the meaning of the stone you saw hewn from the mountain without a hand being put to it, which broke in pieces the tile, iron, bronze, silver, and gold. The great God has revealed to the king what shall be in the future; this is exactly what you dreamed, and its meaning is sure."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm Daniel 3:57, 58, 59, 60, 61

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

"Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever."

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

"Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever."

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

"You heavens, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever."

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

"All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever."

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

"All you hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever."

Give glory and eternal praise to him.

Gospel: Luke 21:5-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here, the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down." Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?" He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'The time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection for the 34th Tuesday of the Year

Both of today's readings have a related theme. Things end; nothing lasts forever but God. No one gets out of this life alive, alive in Christ, yes, after our bodies die. Death will claim us all. Daniel described societal entropy; empires have declined and fell. Sometimes chaos reigns. Each generation will die and make room for the next. Nebuchadnezzar's greatest fear came to be. Babylon is in ruins today and its artifacts stock the displays of musea throughout the world.

However, as people still live, Babylonian DNA may be part of us. Abraham's descendants still believe in God; i.e. Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The ancient cities are gone but people and faith still live. Our society is founded on the ruins and remnants of history. God lives and continues to reveal salvation and life to us. Life and faith are still based in God's love for us.

That's the message Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar and to us. We face the problems of politics, prejudice, pandemic and pollution. All of these exist because of human hubris and reveal human limits and sin. God has no limits. Sometimes we need to seek meaning in the chaos around us by seeking God within us. God is there, never to leave us. We don't have to search very far for God. All we need do is remember God. God will also remember us too, for God never leaves us. Sometimes things work out. They did for Daniel and they do for us.

At the end of the musical "Fiddler on the Roof," the Jews of Anatevka wander and wonder in shock, expelled from their homes due to the violence of an anti-Semitic pogrom. One refugee asked, "Wouldn't this be a good time for the Messiah to come?" He never did nor did they ever return to their homes. However, God went with them. Perhaps, as we survey our world and its and our suffering, we may ask the same question. When will Jesus return? We still wait in the knowledge that Jesus is with us always as he promised. Faith and trust are God's gifts. God's gifts and Jesus' return happen in God's time and way, not in ours.

In the mean time, we live and work. Do we search for a way to avoid trouble or do we search for Jesus presence in it? By faith we know Jesus is there. Jesus predicted the destruction and looting of the temple by the Roman conquerors in 70CE. At Divine Savior, we face a similar possibility too. Renew my Church is a reality. Our location may close. The building is only the

place that the Church gathers. It is the community that gathers in Christ that is the heart of what it means to be a parish, not the real estate. The four parishes will join together bringing their gifts to form a new community of faith.

“Nations will rise against nations.” There have been wars and national violence somewhere in the world throughout my entire life. Natural disasters too. What does Jesus want us to hear in his words? What savior do we seek? If it’s anyone else other than Jesus, we haven’t heard Jesus’ voice. He still calls us. His call is to new life; we can always be better. When we are not, Jesus calls us to repentance for our sins. He offers forgiveness to receive new life. We believe and therefore receive what Jesus offers.

May we hear and respond to Jesus’ call.

James D. Beath

November 23, 2021