

Homily 33rd Sunday Yr B: The End Times & Christ's Eucharistic Reign

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In case you had not noticed it, we are approaching the end of the Church year.

Next week is the feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday of the Church year, after which begins a new Church year with the first Sunday of Advent.

Most fittingly, the *theme* of the readings for this Sunday, which precede next week's celebration of the final triumph of Jesus Christ and His universal Kingship, is the events that will take place at end of the world.

In our first reading for this Sunday, the Old Testament Prophet Daniel speaks about the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, at Christ's 2nd Coming in glory, when He, the King of kings, will judge the living and the dead.

Daniel says that those who sleep in the dust of the earth (the dead) shall rise;

some shall "live forever" (that is, the just) and will "shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament and be like the stars forever";

others shall experience "everlasting horror and disgrace" – that is, the condemned.

Jesus speaks about His 2nd Coming in our Gospel today, when He says that "after the tribulation" they will "see the Son of Man coming on the clouds."

What is this "tribulation" He refers to? The events of the End Times.

The Prophet Daniel tells us what will happen during the End Times, the final days of the world, before Christ's 2nd Coming.

He prophesies how Saint Michael the Archangel, Guardian of the Church, will arise during a time "unsurpassed in distress" from the beginning of the world.

Why will the time preceding Christ's Second coming be a time "unsurpassed in distress"? Because the Antichrist – who will claim to be the Christ/Messiah, but in reality will be a false Christ and demand worship of himself – will rule over the entire world for 3 ½ years – aping the time of Jesus' public ministry of 3 ½ years.

During his horrible reign, he will persecute the faithful in the Church. It will be a time of many martyrs who will shed their blood by giving witness to Jesus.

If you keep reading chapter 12 of the prophet Daniel, he speaks of how during “the end time” - a year, two years, and a half year (3 ½ years in total, the time of the Antichrist) – “many shall fall away and evil shall increase.”

Other books of the Bible speak of these “End Times.”

In Chapter 11 of the Book of Revelation, St. John calls the Antichrist the “Beast.” He speaks of two men who will confront the Antichrist, the Beast, who will reign for 42 months.

Scripture and Tradition tell us these two men are the prophet Elijah (who left the earth in a fiery chariot), and Enoch (an early descendant of Adam & Eve) – both of whom never died, but were taken up by God; they shall return to earth during the reign of the Antichrist: 1,260 days, or 42 months – which is 3 ½ years, and prophesy against him.

They will call down plagues on the inhabitants of earth as punishment for following the Beast: “no rain shall fall [for 3 ½ years]; they will turn water into blood [just as Moses did upon Egypt], and afflict the world with any plague as often as they wish.”

The Beast will kill them, and their corpses will lie on the main street in Jerusalem for 3 ½ days. People on earth will cheer at their death; but after 3 ½ days they will rise and be taken to Heaven. Soon afterward Christ will come in glory.

St. Paul also describes the Antichrist in the 2nd chapter of 2 Thess, whom he calls the “man of perdition” and the “lawless one,” who will “seat himself in the temple of God, claiming that he is a god”; that he will have “power from Satan” to perform many “wonders that lie”; and says that Jesus will “slay him with the breath of his mouth.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 675-677, says that “before Christ’s Second Coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the

faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the mystery of iniquity in the form of a religious deception offering men and apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the antichrist” (675).

“The kingdom of God will be fulfilled . . . only by God’s victory over the final unleashing of evil. . . . God’s triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world” (677).

Yes, Christ’s Kingdom, i.e., the Church, will be fully established at His 2nd Coming with the Final Judgment, when He separates the sheep from the goats and unites all the members of His Church to Himself in His Mystical Body. Then, and only then, will the Kingdom be perfected, with Jesus reigning as King.

In the meantime, Jesus reigns as King – in the Eucharist, where He is present in every tabernacle, and made present on every altar, at every Mass.

This is what many saints refer to as Christ’s “Eucharistic reign.”

And Jesus in the Eucharist reigns not only as our King, but also as our High Priest, who, as our second reading today from Hebrews says, “offered one sacrifice for our sins and forever sits at the right hand of God, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.”

“By His one offering [on the Cross],” says St. Paul, “He has made perfect those who are being consecrated.”

That one offering on the Cross by Jesus is re-presented at every Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; this is what we recall, and celebrate, at every Mass, which makes present Christ’s one Sacrifice which perfectly atoned for our sins.

At this re-presentation of His one, perfect Sacrifice, the great miracle we call *transubstantiation* takes place: The bread and wine are changed into Jesus –

His complete humanity: Body, Blood and soul; and His divinity, as the Eternal Son of God, are made present under the appearance of bread and wine.

The *substance* of Christ's Body and Blood becomes truly present in every consecrated Host.

This is our faith. And Eucharistic miracles confirm this.

I'm now reading a book which I purchased recently at Holy Family Catholic Bookstore, called *Christ, Science, and Reason: What We Can Know about Jesus, Mary, and Miracles*, by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J.; he's often on EWTN.

Chapter 4 of his book is titled, "Science and Eucharistic Miracles." In it he relates some fascinating scientific facts about some recent Eucharistic miracles, where the consecrated Host turned to flesh and blood – something that has been supported by scientific tests.

He begins the chapter (p. 159) saying that, properly speaking, science cannot prove a Eucharistic miracle, because science deals with empirical facts (things that can be weighed, measured, etc.) on a natural level; miracles deal with the supernatural – things above nature. What science can do is rule out a natural explanation of things, which is what a miracle is – a phenomena for which there is no natural explanation.

Fr. Spitzer discusses a Eucharistic miracle that took place in the city of Tixtla, Mexico in 2006 - really fascinating, which I never heard about but which I'm going to share with you today.

The pastor at Saint Martin's of Tours parish invited another priest to give spiritual retreat to his parishioners. At a Mass during the retreat, while he and the other priests were distributing Communion, a religious sister, with tears in her eyes, opened up a pyx to show him a Host which she was going to bring to a sick parishioner. The middle of the Host began to effuse a reddish substance.

As is done in such cases, the pastor brought the Host to the bishop, who arranged for tests to be done on the Host.

Dr. Ricardo Gómez (who was a professed atheist until 1990, when he examined another miraculous Host turned to flesh in Buenos Aires, Argentina), was the first of many scientists to perform tests. He summarized his findings:

Real blood with cells originating from live tissue is being exuded from center of the consecrated Host;

The source of the blood is live cardiac (heart) tissue;

The blood tissue and blood show signs of heart trauma induced from something like trauma to the chest (and we know that Jesus was brutally scourged);

Finally, there is a DNA conundrum: the host contains human DNA material, but the DNA was unable to be amplified, i.e., for genetic profiling.

Regarding the first two findings, Dr. Gómez reported that the reddish substance exuding from the center of the Host is human blood with AB blood type (the same blood type found in all the other Eucharistic miracles, and found on the shroud of Turin, the burial cloth of Jesus).

The Host contains not only *living* red blood cells, but more astonishingly, *living* white blood cells. It is well-established that when white blood cells are removed from living tissue systems, they will die (and disintegrate) within three minutes to one hour (maximum) of being outside of a living system. The host and the blood coming from it were tested over several years, which would necessitate the death of all white blood cells.

In Dr. Gómez's words: "taking the evidence to different laboratories in different nations and continents, without the support of any form of preservation, I could never have imagined that the specialists, despite years that elapsed since the first effusions (4-8 years), identified in the Host 'intact white blood cells.' . . . It is impossible to find intact white blood cells outside of their theological environments, let alone in a piece of bread."

Regarding the second finding: there is not only blood present in the Host, but also *living heart tissue* in the circular area of which the blood is the effusing.

“Fibrous-like structures, suggestive of muscle fibers, are present on the transformed Host and in the blood. Tests determined that the tissue under study corresponds to the heart.”

“With the fact that there are active red blood cells, and more importantly, active white blood cells in the blood, it is concluded that this cardiac tissue is in fact alive.”

SO, what do these Eucharistic miracles tell us?

That the Blessed Sacrament contains the living, beating Heart of our Redeemer! - something we are unable to see under the veil of the consecrated Host; but we believe with the eyes of our Catholic Faith.

Jesus commands us: *“Eat my flesh and drink my blood”* (and He will raise us in bodies glorified on the Last Day). We do so in faith, believing that when the priest at Mass repeats the words that Our Lord spoke at the Last Supper, *“Take and eat, this is my Body . . . Take and drink, this is my Blood,”* that Jesus is really, truly Present in the consecrated Host, along with His Sacred Heart that was pierced for our offenses – the perfect Symbol of His divine and human love.

Jesus and His Heart are present, not only that we may receive Him in Holy Communion, but also to worship Him, adore Him.

Let us believe – and receive – Him who gives us the strength we need to do battle against the dark forces of Satan in our world today, and to persevere in our faith until the end.

Let us worship and adore Jesus – and His Heart – in the Eucharist; Jesus, the King of Love, who reigns over us with a reign of love: our High Priest and Victim, our King and our Lord!