

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (11/14-15/2009)

Daniel 12/1-3, Psalm 16, Hebrews 10/11-18, Mark 13/24-32

The civilized world is, with good reason, deeply concerned about the nuclear situation in Iran. It seems that the Iranian government, by hook or by crook, is determined to produce an atomic or hydrogen bomb of its own.

The Iranians protest that they are merely developing atomic power as a future source of energy, but their leadership on the international scene is so unstable, no one believes them.

The scenario of an irresponsible government harboring a weapon of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East, is a frightening prospect indeed.

In another vein, today's Gospel passage is one of those apocalyptic warnings that dire things will happen before the second coming of the Lord and the end of the world.

Many early Christians believed that the final conflagration would happen during their lifetime.

They expected Jesus to return soon, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD..

It didn't happen then or later, of course, though there has been no lack of man-made and natural disasters in the centuries following.

The twentieth century from which we have just emerged, for example, has proved to be the bloodiest 100 years in human history.

Two World Wars, plagues, famines, genocide, earthquakes, tsunamis, global warming, you name it; destructiveness has existed on a very large scale.

If ever the world was ripe for the return of the Lord to make all things right, it would have been during the just lapsed century.

But God will act when God acts – and no one knows when that will be.

Even Jesus admits he is in the dark, *“But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”*

The Church, through its Sacred Liturgy, reminds us of the words of Jesus, and that there will one day be a time of reckoning for all of us individually, for all of us in community.

But, back to Iran.

Iran, with a missile of mass destruction at its beck and call, could conceivably be the sparkplug for an all-consuming war in the Middle East.

And that war could well spell the end of civilization as we know it around the world.

Not a very encouraging thought on this second week of November.

We have to, as a nation and as individuals, recommit ourselves to peace efforts, no matter how futile they sometimes appear.

In terms of the sheer quantity of destructive weapons, we in the U. S. are the most heavily armed nation on earth, but destructive power is not the answer.

We followers of Jesus have to bring our concerns and the concerns of the world around us to the table in peace, and to the Lord in prayer.

Self-destruction is not God's plan for us.

Life and the preservation of life are what Jesus preaches and teaches in season, out of season.