

## Theme of the Week - Power from Heaven

Sunday marks the last Sunday in Ordinary time of the liturgical year (year B or II) meaning this is the last reading from Mark's Gospel (during year B, in Ordinary time, we hear mainly from Mark's Gospel apart from certain occasions). The Gospel on Sunday is the final message that Jesus shared with his disciples before His Passion, so it is not surprising that he concentrates on helping them to understand something of the end times. We need to remember not to try and take the Gospel in a literal sense, but focus on the message that was being conveyed: to live in anticipation of the end of our own life or times and to always make sure we do so with God firmly in our hearts. Jesus tells His disciples to spread the Good News and live in anticipation of the time when God's plan comes to fruition. By using a fig tree as a sign of the coming of summer, Jesus points out to His disciples that they must observe the world around them.

The Gospel tells us the time of salvation is not known for certain. It paints a picture of stressful times and disorder, a time when creation is in flux. And if we read the Psalm from Sunday it points us to the attitude we should adopt in the face of chaos and disorder, and offers us hope, "*Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you*". The first Christians believed that the end times and Christ's second coming were very close, and it was only after many years when this did not happen that the language of the second coming was mellowed. Recognising the 'signs of the times' and responding in faith to changing circumstances and seeking shelter in God is required of Christians.

Can you reflect on a time when you have experienced chaos and disorder? Or times when you have felt things were happening around you that you could not control? What did this feel like? And if you can't, can you imagine what life is like for those experiencing war at the moment? How must they feel? What words of Jesus stay with you when you are most in need? Why is this? Let us again reflect on our Catholic Social Teaching principle of the 'Preferential Option for the Poor' and where Pope Francis says "The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!" so let us use the parable of the fig tree; where and what is the need for society and particularly the poor at the moment? How can you be more **attentive** and **discerning** this week to help those in turmoil or in chaos?



## From the Gospel of Mark (13:24-32)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

## Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Yours are the hands that shaped the universe. Yours is the love that has been most perfectly and wonderfully revealed in Christ. Allow us to spread the Good News to those in most need.

Through Christ our Lord

Amen

### Day 1

Why do you think Jesus is preparing the disciples for the end of time and before His passion?

How does Jesus use the image of a fig tree to demonstrate to His disciples?

### Day 2

What is the sign of our time?  
i.e What world do you see around you?

How do you and others respond in faith?

### Day 3

When you experienced chaos in your life, how did you feel?

What words from Jesus, in any of the Gospels, mean most to you?

How can you be more **attentive** and **discerning** to these words to help those in turmoil or chaos?

### *Catholic Social Teaching - Option for the Poor*

A preferential option for the poor means that we think first about the needs of those who are the most vulnerable. Jesus taught that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, look after the sick and visit those imprisoned, we are looking after Him. We work wherever the need is greatest. We refuse to accept the suffering of our brothers and sisters. No one should be beyond reach of the love and support they need "The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!"

The [Option for the Poor] affects the life of each Christian as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ." St Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 42

**How this half term can you promote the Common Good in all that you do in St Joseph's and society?**

