

A Year of Renewal

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Nov. 14/15

God's Presence/Call – my call as a member of the community

In the first week of the Year of Renewal we were asked to explore in my personal history what are my images of God, where I have met God, experienced God's call and my experience of God in personal prayer. The second week of the Year of Renewal we explored what is my personal history in relation to community in terms of my family, work, church and community. In this third week of the Year of Renewal we will explore our call as a member of the community in the church and in the world. What are the signs of the times? What is God calling us to? How are we called to respond?

Readings from the

Liturgy: *Prayerfully read*

Daniel 12: 1-3 and Mark 13: 24-32

(You may want to read all of chapter 13).

This book tells us virtually all we know about the prophet Daniel; the specific author of the book is unknown. The book is arranged in no historical order and has come down to us written in different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. There are unusual changes in grammatical construction which leads scholars to believe it was written by multiple authors and/or

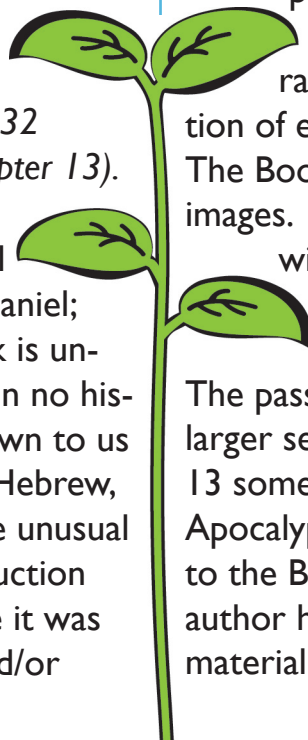
editors. The prophet Daniel speaks ultimately of hope, redemption, resurrection to those who belong to God and a promise of a recovery of life for those who lie in the dust.

The reading from the Book of Daniel offers us the opportunity to learn about a literary genre called apocalyptic writing. Scholars believe this passage was written during the Maccabean revolt against the Hellenistic ruler around 167-164 BC. Thus, the context is a life and death struggle of the Jewish people, against both military and the influence of a pagan culture that threatened their ancient faith. The message of the passage is immediate, to sustain

the nation in a time of crisis, rather than a long-range description of event at the end of the world. The Book of Daniel is filled with special images. It is not a description of what will happen; it is only a vision, like a work of poetry.

The passage from Mark is part of a larger section which includes chapter 13 sometimes referred to as the "Little Apocalypse" because of its similarity to the Book of Revelation. Here the author has combined several strands of material into a single narrative.

continued



Written for a community that had witnessed the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD and was undergoing the effects of Roman persecution, Mark's gospel message urges hope in God's abiding presence and protection, but it is not intended as a kind of almanac with which one can read the time of the end days. The people in the early days of the church awaited with hope and anticipation the second coming of Jesus. Jesus challenges his disciples in the illustration of the fig tree to look for the signs of God's presence and to see this process through God's eyes. All would happen in God's time.

Reflection QUESTIONS

1 How would you express the meaning of these scripture readings for you in your own words?

2 In what way does your faith and relationship with God impact your feelings about the end times?

3 In what way(s) does this gospel passage challenge you in the way you live?

4 What are some of your feelings about the end times?

P of the week PRAYER

Glory and Praise to you, O God, the God whom women and men of faith have believed in for centuries. Deepen our belief in you, the one who created us, the one who gives us the gift of faith, the one who teaches our hearts your ways. Keep our hearts directed toward you in times of suffering and challenge. Open us to the depths and power of the way of life Christ proclaimed. Make us sensitive to the inner promptings of your Spirit. May we be faithful witnesses to the Good News of your presence in all we say and do. Amen.

A Family ACTIVITY on the images of God

Separate the family into smaller groups of two or three. Ask them to think of all the things they see in church. These things point to God. What do they say about God?

Next, ask the whole group to mention several things that aren't obviously religious. (nature, sports, school, household tasks, etc.) Ask the same question. What do these things say about God?

