



November 15, 2009
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Friends,

Today's gospel of Mark assumes an audience that needs COURAGE to face devastation and persecution. Mark was writing after the terrible destruction of the Temple, about 40 years after Jesus' death. Sitting on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the temple, his disciples Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Jesus when the end of time will come and what signs should they expect.

The last sentence of today's gospel says: "As to the day or hour, no one knows it, neither the angels in heaven nor even the Son, only the Father."

Shall I ask myself the question: "Am I ready for the end of time?" Can I put this moment into the context of all eternity?

To deal with this tough and maybe uncomfortable topic let us turn to prayer. The daily schedule of our society has "normal" expectations built in – lunch hour, "happy hour," exercise time, commuter time, bed time, and a few others. But it doesn't have "prayer time" built in. Yet, prayer is the answer!

This means that if I am going to practice the Christian tradition of daily prayer, I'm going to have to be "counter-cultural" - a bit out of step. I'll have to make a decision to pray and then develop it into a habit. (That's what a "virtue" is - a good habit.) So I want to select a form of prayer that fits me, determine a prayer-time that will work, and a prayer-place that provides me quiet.

Maybe 5 minutes in the car, parked by the sidewalk after dropping the children off at school will be my prayer time. Silently sitting beside my sleeping child/spouse may give me the peace I need to listen to God and then respond. Opening the Scriptures and relishing one sentence or paragraph, knowing that God is speaking to me right now, may give me courage. Putting my thoughts in writing, journaling with the Lord, may bring me spiritual growth. Now add my own way.

Each of us will know our best moment. Decide; then tell someone "when and how" you hope to pray each day. In a timely fashion, then share with this confidant your progress or difficulty as you are "developing the habit." Support each other in this counter-cultural activity! Pray with a grateful heart!

Will I be ready when the end of time comes? Or when the end of my time comes?

Someone once posed this question: "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

The answer is a resounding "YES" if I listen and respond faithfully to Jesus and His Spirit who live within me. Our God is the hope of the hopeless and the power of the powerless. Let us stand tall and walk our journey with this God. Be a person who brings HOPE for others; live with courage (and humor)!

In Jesus and Mary,

Sister Barbara, sjm