19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle C

Wis 18: 6-9; Heb 11: 1-2, 8-19; Lk 12:32-48

August 7/8, 2010

Over 25 years ago, my good friend Mike and I were driving to our deer stands for the evening. (We hunted together every year back then.) Mike turned to me, after I had said something I cannot remember, and said, **“Bob**, **what if all the promises of Jesus come true?”**

Today, we hear in the Gospel that God promises the “Kingdom” to those who wait and are prepared.

Have you ever waited and waited, a long time waited, for something that you believed would happen? Was there ever something promised to you that was so important that you waited, believed, and hoped it would come true, and you silently prepared yourself for it?

As a child, my favorite movie was *The Wizard of Oz*. You know the story line: a young girl, Dorothy, falls into a strange world and desperately wants to be reunited with her grandparents and friends. She is told she can go home if she just talks to the Wizard. So she travels a long way, all the while preparing herself for what she believes will be given her. She believes the promise will come true. She prepares herself as she waits and walks, symbolically developing her mind, heart and courage by befriending the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Lion. Just when she thinks the Wizard will grant her wish, she is told she must prepare in one more way – she must confront and overcome evil in the person of the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy does all of this and in the end, the promise comes true and she returns home.

This movie is an allegory of sorts on Christian life: falling from our original holiness and ending up in a strange land where we wait and prepare ourselves for a return to our heavenly home by developing our virtues and conquering sin.

For what have you waited, patiently waiting and preparing for it to occur?

Perhaps you have had to wait a long time for your first baby, hoping that maybe this month you would be pregnant. As you waited, you did everything possible to prepare for a child.

Perhaps you have waited and waited for one of your adult children to return to the Church and the practice of the Faith. You believed in the promise of Jesus that He would never abandon one of His children, so you waited and you prayed.

Perhaps you have waited for God to remove from your life a sinful habit that despite your own best efforts, you were unable to conquer. You believed in Christ’s promise that good overcomes evil, so you kept waiting, believing somehow you would be freed from this slavery, hoping to be set free.

Perhaps you were unemployed and waited and waited for that next job. You held on to the promise of Jesus that God will provide all that is necessary, so you believed and hoped for a better tomorrow.

Perhaps you have waited a long time for an unfaithful husband or wife to come to his or her senses and return to you, really return a changed person, and asking for forgiveness. You believed in Jesus’ promise to soften even the most hardened of hearts. You remembered the parable of the Prodigal Son, so you waited and hoped.

Perhaps God has seemed so distant or even absent from your life, yet you clung to God’s promise to care for you, so you waited for Him to give you some sign of His loving presence.

Maybe the depths of depression and emptiness once seemed endless, and all you had between life and death was Jesus’ promise that for those who are baptized in Him, death has no more power over them, so you waited and hoped.

In all these situations, you waited because you hoped and believed in God’s promises – or if not you, then someone else believed and hoped in them, and you drew your strength from these others.

In all these situations, I suspect, as you waited you prepared yourself, trying to be ready at a moment’s notice for it to come true.

Today’s Gospel begins by reminding everyone to have faith, to wait and to prepare for Jesus’ return and the promise of the Kingdom. The Gospel concludes with some very challenging words for those who lead the Church, i.e., we the clergy.

Peter asks, “Do you intend this for us, or for the whole world?” Jesus response is clear. We deacons, priests and bishops are called to be stewards of God’s Truth, His Word and the Sacraments. We are called to lives of service in the Church for your benefit, you the laity. We are called to serve you, and it is our responsibility to not grow lax, to not “abuse the man servants or the maidservants” as the Gospel says, to not forget that the Lord promised He *will* return and He fully expects us to be busy doing His work, giving our lives, to Him, to whom we must render an account.

God help us in to carry out our Master’s commands.

All of us, laity and clergy alike, must be about the Work of God, as we wait for Jesus’ return, for when He comes – and yes, *He is coming as surely as the sun rises and sets* – when He comes we will be given the Kingdom if we are prepared.

We must be about the work of God, prepared and ready at a moment’s notice to welcome Him back.

Are we ready should He return today?

***My friends, what if all the promises of Jesus come true?***

Come, Lord Jesus, come!