

NOVEMBER 18, 2018

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 [DN 12:1-3](#)

Responsorial Psalm [PS 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11](#)

R. (1) You are my inheritance, O Lord!

Reading 2 [HEB 10:11-14, 18](#)

Brothers and sisters: Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God; now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin.

Gospel [MK 13:24-32](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, 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, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. . . .

HOMILY:

As we head towards the end of November, many of us have Thanksgiving on our minds, including our First Graders at St. Edward School. In preparation for our national holiday of gratitude, they were asked the intriguing question, posed in the form of a sentence completion. IF I WERE A TURKEY...

As an English teacher, I'm always interested in themes in writing.

- DECEPTION: Clint writes: If I were a turkey...I would play dead. Nobody would get me. They would Eat me.
- REVENGE: Philip writes: If I were a turkey... I would live in a house. I would eat a human.
- PRUDENCE: Kate writes: If I were a turkey...I would not go to the farm because I do not want to get eaten. I would run away for my life. I will find corn. I eat corn. I love corn on the cob. I will look for a safe place. I will hide.
- SELF-CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF DANGER: Madi writes: If I were a turkey...I would go to Disney Land and live there. I would ask if I could be a princess too. If she says yes, I will try to be a farmer and buy a limo and ride it. One the way to see my fans, I will buy a dress and ... a necklace and put them on and now I can see my fans. I love turkey.
- SELF-PRESERVATION: Johanis writes: If I were a turkey...I would run away. I will eat food. I am going to live with Miss Schaeffer. *I didn't know our daycare was a turkey sanctuary!*
- But most frequently, the children spoke from the RUN FOR YOUR LIVES SCHOOL: Madison speaks for turkeys everywhere: If I were a turkey...I would run away from the

farm. I would be a cute turkey and I would run away from Thanksgiving as I can't get eaten!

The imagination of our first-graders speaks to every human heart, touching on the instinct of self-preservation and the understandable drive to avoid threat and even death—and not just for turkeys! While we'll want to “run for our lives” away from harm, Jesus in love “runs for our lives” toward the harm that can save us—the sacrifice of the cross.

This is the central message of the Letter to the Hebrews, from which we hear today. The letter says about Jesus: “But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God; now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated.” In his perfect humanity, Jesus shows us the highest expression of humanity when he doesn't flee the sacrifice, but instead offers the perfect act of self-sacrificial love that heals us and breaks the cycle of sin and death in this sin-sick world. This is good news! The remedy has arrived—and keeps coming!

The gospel of Mark, in its description of the end of time, tells us how it is the Divine will that all be gathered into God's saving remedy by Jesus, when Jesus himself says, “And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.” Friends, the gathering of God's elect into His kingdom is happening right here, when, through the sacrifice of the Mass, we can touch the sacrificial love of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus, re-presented to each of us, elect in baptism, the sacrifice that gathers us into the merciful heart of God. When we can't save ourselves in this fallen world of sin and death, Jesus does not flee the sacrifice, but brings it to us—right here.

In turkeys ...and humans, self-preservation is a powerful instinct. But not for Jesus. Our preservation is His highest desire—which led to the perfect saving act of love that we here are given. Let us come; no, let us run for our lives; into this One and perfect sacrifice, in which we participate every time at this altar—the perfect love that comes to us, heals us, and perfects us. Because of his astonishing, perfect, self-sacrificial love of the savior running to each of our prodigal hearts, we can only offer thanksgiving.