

25 S. after Pentecost 11/14/21
Daniel 12:1-3 28B

AT THAT TIME SHALL ARISE MICHAEL, THE GREAT PRINCE WHO HAS CHARGE OF YOUR PEOPLE. AND THERE SHALL BE A TIME OF TROUBLE, SUCH AS NEVER HAS BEEN SINCE THERE WAS A NATION TILL THAT TIME. BUT AT THAT TIME YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE DELIVERED, EVERYONE WHOSE NAME SHALL BE FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK. AND MANY OF THOSE WHO SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT.

The great crowd following Jesus as He entered the city of Nain met another great crowd from that city accompanying a funeral procession. Any funeral is sad, but this was especially tragic because this was the funeral for the only son of a widow. When Jesus saw her in her grief, He “had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep’”. Then He literally reached out His hand and touched the funeral bier – which was a violation of the Levitical law, by the way – and said “Young man, I say to you, arise” and “the dead man sat up and began to speak” (cf. Lk 7:11-14).

Then, when He returned to the city of Capernaum, the ruler of the synagogue, Jairus was his name, fell at His feet and begged Jesus to come to His house and heal his beloved daughter. But as Jesus is busy healing the woman with a hemorrhage, someone came to the ruler of the synagogue with the news that his daughter is dead. But, that didn’t stop the Master of Life. He went to Jairus’ house, took hold of the little girl’s hand – once again violating the Levitical law, because remember touching the dead left one unclean – and said “Child, arise,” and “she rose immediately” (cf. Lk 8:41-42,54-55).

Then, there was the time Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem where He would be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and die, when

He received word from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus was ill. So He made His way to their home in Bethany, only to find out that Lazarus was dead and buried. And Jesus wept at his friend's grave. After telling the people to take away the stone that lay against the entrance to his tomb, He Who is the Resurrection and Life cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out," and "the man who had died came out" (cf. Jn 9:1-44).

Dear Saints of God, these miraculous raisings of the dead by Jesus are but a foretaste of the feast to come. We confess in the Creed the great truth of the Christian faith, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," because the Bible clearly teaches that the dead will be raised to life again. The same bodies that have died will live again. This is what Daniel teaches us this day, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (v. 2).

As our worship approaches the end of the Church year, our focus is on the return of Christ and the glorious day of the resurrection of all the dead. You don't have to be CPT Obvious to know that it is getting cold outside. The light of day is growing shorter each day. The harvest is chiefly over. You have raked leaves, and more leaves, because they have fallen from the tree, their source of life, and died. You carved a pumpkin on Halloween because that pumpkin was dead, having been plucked from the life-giving vine from which it grew.

The changes that we see and feel in the world are a reflection of earthly life. We must never lose sight of the great comfort that our bodies will rise from the dead because Daniel says, "there will be a time of trouble" (v. 1). And you, Dear Child of God, know that trouble all too well.

Riots, thefts, vandalism, murders, rapes, ugly confrontations, shouting matches. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Cancer, Covid,

Chemotherapy, IV's, another trip to the dr's office for yet another appointment. Injustice, sadness, loneliness, worry, fear, regret. Heresy and lies of the devil, you know those all-too-well because you hear them every day: you have to ask Jesus into your heart because baptism is not a work of God, but something you do; Holy Communion is just bread and wine, nothing more; you can't eat meat on Friday; all religions worship the same god and all religions lead to the same heaven.

Trouble. You've got it. And do not have it because you don't have enough money or Mom and Dad didn't buy you a new Nintendo, or the wrong party is in power. You experience these birth pains because Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and brought us into sin and the wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23). Trouble, and you know how it ends -- death.

II. In our lesson, the Prophet Daniel has good news for us children of God. God promises through Daniel that the Savior is coming to deliver and save God's people from this present age of decay and death, "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people...at that time your people shall be delivered" (v. 1).

Michael is our Savior Christ Himself. He arose when He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem. In the flesh and blood of a man, the Holy Son of God became unclean for you. You will recall that when Jesus performed His miracles of raising the dead, He became **unclean** because the Old Testament Law said any living person became by touching the dead or anything upon which a dead body laid. He became **unclean**, for you Dear Child of God, when He took all your sin upon Himself. He took all your despair; all the times you thought God had abandoned you; or worse even punishing you in the hour of trial; all the times you did not fear, love, and trust in God above all things and He carried all those sins to the cross and

there He died as the wages of those sins. By His death, He Jesus crushed the head of the devil for us and He rose the 3rd day to deliver us from death and the grave.

That's what He did when He claimed you by name in the waters of your Baptism. He marked you with His cross, so that death passes over you. He is coming back to bring you home to be with Him, so that you may fear the grave as little as your bed.

III. On that day Jesus comes to take you to be with you in heaven, He will take your soul to be with Him and your body will return to the dust of the earth from which it came. But, we must never forget that God did not create our body and our soul to be apart; separated from one another. So, on that glorious day Jesus comes again, the dead shall rise, all the dead: believers and unbelievers, and soul and body will be united and one again. The soul and body of the unbeliever will go into the shame and torment of hell eternity and the soul and body of the Christian Saint will be with Jesus in the majesty of heaven; and you will shine like stars forever and ever.

As you await that day, in the midst of war, divorce, illness, and sorrow, burdened by guilt, shame, and regret, your Michael continues to come to deliver you as He has promised -- in His Holy Word and Sacrament. You are not alone; your Lord Christ is ever with you. He comes to speak words of joy and comfort. He comes to feed you with His Body and His Blood so that you will be strengthened in all trials; so that you will have joy and the peace that surpasses all understanding while you wait and live -- even in your tears.

I don't want you to think that I'm minimizing or dismissing these terrifying and alarming signs and birth pains as nothing for us to be concerned with. They're real; they cause real tears; and the leave real

scars. But Jesus says, "He who endures to the end will be saved." In the midst of trouble -- war, famine, natural disaster, family in-fighting, illness and death, our physical eyes see only fear, defeat, and death. But, the eyes of faith see victory, the crown of life, and the end of all tears. We have this confidence because God "who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Ph 1:6).