

Our readings today speak of the end times

The events threatened are promised

They will occur at some point in history

Many people want to jump the gun

They interpret these to mean we are very close to the end today

And events like Friday night in Paris add fuel to that fire

But that is heretical thought

We do not know the time or day

That is for God to know

To spend time entrenched in these prophecies is foolish

Because this can tempt us to live in fear

And not living in trust that God is in control

To quote Fr Joe Walijewski

(Priest, Bolivia and Peru)

When things look bleak and overwhelming, he would say

'Don't worry, nothing will be all right'

But at the end of his earthly battle, he changed this just a bit

He told those gathered around his deathbed

Don't worry, everything will be all right

That is what our readings are telling us today

The first reading is from the last chapter of the Book of Daniel

A book many think of as an apocalyptic book

One that deals with the end times

Similar to the Book of Revelation in the New Testament

Yes, these books are similar

But these are more than writings and warnings of the end times

Rather they are revealing the meaning of life

Daniel sees a time of trial and tribulation

But he also sees hope

He sees Michael, the patron of Israel, rising up as a guardian

Everyone whose name is found written in the book of life

Will escape under his protection

And the wise shall be like the stars forever

The world has always been a place of sorrows

Trials and troubles

In the midst of these we need to see the whole picture

In the words of Christ in John 16

In the world you will have tribulation

But be of good cheer

I have overcome the world

**The Israelite community again and again was captured and
exiled from their homeland**

Again and again God brings them home

The first disciples experienced the passion of Christ

They also experienced his resurrection

But that did not end the strife

They experienced the destruction of the temple

The one thing that gave meaning to the Israelite nation

It was where man came face to face with God

Where they offered sacrifices to God

But the blood of animals can never take away sin

As our reading from Hebrews states

Jesus made one sacrifice for sins

Now he is at God's right hand

He waits until his enemies are made his footstool

This will be accomplished at some time

There will be a Second Coming of Christ

These cataclysmic events will occur

And there will be a transformation of the world

He will establish a new heaven and a new earth

But it does not profit us to spend time worrying about this

The Book of Daniel was written to a people in exile

In danger of losing hope

**The Letter to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Mark were written
to a similar people**

They had experienced the death and resurrection of Christ

But now things don't seem any better

They witnessed the destruction of the Temple

They are being persecuted and forced from Jerusalem

They were in danger of losing hope

Today it doesn't seem much better

In the past century

We have experienced 2 world wars

The rise of fascism, communism and now radical Islamism and ISIS

We can be in danger of losing hope

In our Gospel, Christ uses O.T. words and warnings

And these are relevant for us today

There will be tribulation

The sun and moon darkened

Stars falling from the sky

These cataclysmic events will transform the world

Just as the resurrection transformed Christ

After he was raised, even his closest friends didn't recognize him

We have no idea what the new heaven and new earth will be like

Only that it will be

And we do not know if we will meet Christ at the end of time

Or at the end of our time

We only know that we will meet him face to face

Now when these things begin to take place

Look up and raise your heads

Because your redemption is at hand

It is easy to get distracted into thinking of the last battle

And not pay attention to the current battle

But it is the current battle that we can do something about

We pray for the glorious return of Christ

For his deliverance from all the evils and wrongs we experience

But as we wait

We engage in the battle

Full of hope

Full of confidence

When Christ rose from the dead, he ushered in the end times

This is a time of conflict between good and evil

In these times, God's grace is present

The Archangel Michael will arise

Not as an avenger, but as a protector

While one or the other may seem to have the upper hand at any given moment

We are called to see these things in proper perspective

The perspective our readings offer today

The war has been won, and this brings hope and trust

While we wait for the final battle

We fight the battle in front of us

And don't worry

Nothing will be all right

Until the day

When everything will be all right