November 15, 2015
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – “My Words Will Not Pass Away”
Deacon Dave Snyder

Reading 1: Daniel 12:1-3
In those days, I Daniel, heard this word of the Lord: “At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace. But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.”

Reading 2: Hebrews 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: Mark 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. “Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

HOMILY
A businessman needed a million dollars to close an important business transaction, so he decided to go to church to pray for the money. He knelt down and started praying – near him was a man who was praying for a hundred dollars that he needed to pay an urgent debt. The businessman overheard the other fellow’s prayer, took out his wallet and pressed the hundred dollars into the other man's hand. Overjoyed, the other man got up and ran out of the church! The businessman then closed his eyes and prayed, “And now, Lord, that I have your undivided attention ...”

When we pray, we most often use words. Words … the power of words … the importance of words … the lasting impact of words.
Back in high school, just a few years ago, I had a math geometry course with about 35 other students. Our math teacher encouraged us with words starting from day one. His words of support, his words of making us believe in ourselves, his words of wanting us to do our best, paid off in the end, for every one of us. It wasn’t an easy course, because he taught us much more than what was required, even squeezing in a second course of material, saying it would help us in the long run. But his
accompanying words helped each of us get through it, and do very, very well in the final exam. In fact, I might give credit to that teacher as having the most influence on my eventual career choice as an engineer. Maybe you can think of someone who encouraged you when you were younger, or even now. Someone who helped you be who you are now, maybe the kind of person you are, the career choice you made, how you interact with others, even your faith in God. Someone who used words that have had a lasting, positive impact on your life.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” Recall those words of Jesus that Mark provides us in today’s Gospel reading. I’m going to ask you now to think what words of Jesus have NOT passed away for you, that are alive with you now, that might be alive with others around you now. <pause> What if we included Jesus’ actions as words, because actions can speak louder than words. And what words from Jesus will Father say in just a few minutes as he consecrates the bread and wine into Our Lord’s Body and Blood?

If you think back to this past summer, we spent several weeks with John’s Gospel, Chapter 6, especially pertaining to the Bread of Life discourse. You may remember those passages when Jesus said to those around Him that He is the Bread of Life. As Catholic Christians, we believe with our whole heart, mind and soul, our whole being that Jesus is the Bread of Life, and that Father, in persona Christi, in the person of Christ, is consecrating that bread and wine into Our Lord’s Body and Blood. We do assert that belief, when we come up to receive the Eucharist and say with complete affirmation, “Amen,” when offered the Host or Cup. Yes, Lord, I believe it is YOU that I am receiving! Yes, Lord, I believe that you are truly present in that consecrated host, truly present in that consecrated wine. Amen, Lord!

You may have seen recent articles in the parish bulletin about Eucharistic Adoration and I’d like to tell you a little more about that. In Eucharistic Adoration, a consecrated Host is visibly displayed in a vessel, called a monstrance, almost two feet high. The monstrance with consecrated Host is placed on an altar and displayed for adorers to come and silently talk, and listen, to Jesus, who we just said is truly present, in both a spiritual and physical sense. Many churches offer Adoration opportunities for an hour or more each week – St. Louis does so on Thursday evenings, 8 pm. Some churches offer it once a month, typically for a few hours – St. Louis does that also, on First Fridays. Some churches offer it around the clock, 24 hours a day, every day of the week, with certain exceptions – it’s called Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, or PEA. St. John of Rochester, my home parish before coming to St. Louis, is just a few minutes away, on Route 31 heading towards Fairport. It has offered PEA in its chapel for just over 25 years. You may already be a weekly or substitute adorer there, or elsewhere, or may have occasionally stopped in for a prayer – many, many do, at any hour of the day or night. I have been a weekly adorer since it began, and my wife, Barb, is a substitute.

St. Louis is now forming a Perpetual Adoration group. For numerous reasons, especially including the need for a quiet, private location, but also for security and other concerns, St. Louis will be entering into a partnership with St. John’s, sharing their Adoration chapel alongside adorers from St. John’s. St. Louis has already established some partnerships with St. John’s – the most familiar and most successful has been our mutual support for Saint’s Place. Many of you know that the administration and collection of donations and materials is done right next door to the Manse here, while St. John’s has converted some former school classrooms into areas where furniture and other large items are stored. Other areas there are available as showrooms for clothes, shoes and other items for the refugees to come and select what they need. It has been a fantastic success, and we are praying that this partnership on Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration will also benefit both parishes.
So, how will PEA benefit St. Louis parish and how will it benefit … you? Let’s start with you. Many adorers, including myself, have found a certain peace and relaxation away from a hectic lifestyle, a place to read some faith-based books, or even just private time communicating with Our Lord in silent prayer. Others may be bothered by troubling events or times in their lives, or in the world about them – and these are troubling times, aren’t they – they may find a calming effect from prayer or readings. Have you ever truly had quiet time talking with Jesus, and listening to what He is saying to you? Here is Jesus, physically and visibly present with you, who is available to hear your stories, your troubles, your prayers. Likewise, you’ve been hearing about the upcoming Year of Mercy, and you’ll be hearing much more as the weeks go on – prayer for the living and the dead is one of the spiritual works of mercy. Prayer can help lead us into other spiritual … and corporal … works of mercy, as well – caring for those we love and those in need. And in prayer, here is Jesus, offering you His mercy, His love, His support. Here is Jesus, offering you … His Words. “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

How will PEA benefit the faith community at St. Louis? Many spiritual benefits and graces can be attributed to the establishment of a parish PEA program, including, to name a few:
- an increase in Mass attendance and reception of the sacraments;
- return of fallen-away Catholics and an increase in the number of conversions;
- increase in religious and priestly vocations;
- renewal of Catholic family life;
- spiritual level … raised with a resulting desire and courage to spread the “good news” to others;
- a greater community spirit, centered as it is on the heart of the parish, Jesus' presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

We will begin this parish program within the next several days, and are encouraging each parishioner to seriously consider it. We are looking for people, or families, who can commit to an hour each week, at a time and on a day that you decide, although there are certain hours that are more in need of a regular adorer right now. We are looking for people who can be a substitute for someone who can’t make it – you decide if you can do it and what hours might be available for you to substitute. And we are looking for people who may drop in once in a while to pray. We will maintain the list of St. Louis adorers, and may occasionally send out information and prayer requests. There is much, much more to say about PEA – read the bulletin in the upcoming weeks, or see me. If you are ready to sign-up today, we will have sign-ups in the Narthex after Mass. If you are not ready just yet, I only ask you to think, and pray, about it – please take an information sheet with you when you leave today, visit the chapel over this next week, by yourself or with someone else, bring a faith-based book or read one from the bookshelves in the chapel, and give it a chance. You might be very surprised. Some concern was expressed earlier about being able to commit an hour each week – Fr. Bob suggested that maybe the time could be split with a friend with some 5 or 10 minutes overlap, using that overlap time to pray for the other’s intentions. A few people thought that family members could take different weeks to cover the time, as needed. You might even have a different way to do it. Sign-ups will be an on-going activity after this weekend, and you can contact me with any questions.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” The words of Jesus that you will hear during the consecration in just a few minutes, the words of Jesus in the acts of mercy we do in His name, the words of Jesus we may hear during private time in prayer with Him, will not pass away.