



## Mark 13:24-32

**24** Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, **25** the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. **26** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; **27** then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven. **28** 'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. **29** So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. **30** I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. **32** 'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

Other readings: Daniel 12:1-3 Psalm 15 (16) Hebrews 10:11-14,18

Our gospel reading today is taken from the final chapter of the story of the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. In chapter 14 the story of the Passion will begin. In this chapter, Jesus looks to the future and talks about the things that are to come and about the end of time. He has encouraged his disciples to face wars, disasters and persecutions. There will be a 'time of distress' to be endured by all.

Jesus' words become much more dramatic as he talks about cosmic events. He uses the language customary at the time to speak of the end of the world. The climax will be the coming of 'the Son of Man'. Jesus takes this concept from the Book of Daniel and applies it to himself. At his glorious return his followers will be gathered together from all corners of the earth.

People have questioned and speculated about the end of the world, and in particular about the time of its happening. Having spoken of the signs that will precede it, Jesus gives a warning: no-one but the Father knows the time of the end. It is useless to speculate about all this, but, as the gospels repeatedly urge us, we are to live in readiness for the end of our lives. The final message of Jesus' teaching in Mark's gospel is that we should 'Stay awake!' We are called to live in imitation of the Son of Man, who came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for us.

*Do I look forward to the gathering together of all God's people?*

*What have I learnt from the liturgical reading of the Gospel of Mark this year?*

*Let us pray for trustfulness and courage as we face life's trials.*

*Let us pray for serenity and confidence in the loving kindness of God, whose plans for the world will come to completion in a way and at a time we do not know.*