

Readings: Mark 13:24-32      Ps 15

Last week we buried a young man of 33. Next week we will bury a woman in her 50s. *'Stay awake and stand ready'* says Jesus, *'because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming'*.

*...the stars will come falling from the heavens and the power in the heavens will be shaken. And then, they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

What Jesus is talking about here is not of course the ending of our individual lives in death but what Jesus is talking about is death itself.

And what is more, this ending of the world, this ending of life is going to take place before this generation has passed away. Jesus believed that the end of the world would come within his lifetime. And the end of the world did come within his lifetime. The end of the world came about the moment the nails were hammered into his hands and feet. As he was dying on the cross, *the sun was darkened and the curtain of the Temple was torn in two.*

The human attempt and approach to God by our own efforts has now been completely superseded by the one single sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Christ has now taken his place **for ever** at the right hand of God. By that one single offering he has achieved the **eternal** perfection of all whom he is sanctifying.

The passing of time, a short life or a long life, are irrelevant to the Christian believer. Our home is already in heaven. All we have to do is to hold on to the Cross, to be part of the one eternal sacrifice of Christ. This is why sharing in the Eucharist is so wonderful and so beautiful. Sharing in the Eucharist is 'the source and summit' of our lives. Sharing in the Eucharist is sharing in eternal perfection. Sharing in the Eucharist is sharing in the end of the world here and now.

*O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;  
it is you yourself who are my prize.*

Neither the past nor the future can touch us. All that matters is the eternal now. And it is for that eternal now that we must be completely alert and awake.

Fr Michael