

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Kind appreciation to all those who joined us Monday to honor our veterans — those currently serving and those who did not come back alive. Thank you to their families. A very special appreciation to brother Knights of Columbus of our Council.

With the culmination of ‘B’ liturgical year ending next Sunday, notice how many of our recent November liturgies have been structured to sweep our heart and spirits to the *end* of all things. These all combine with the assurances that our God will be with us all the days of our lives, that we will have the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Our readings this weekend emphasize the rich ways we can characterize the coming of Jesus in our lives: His coming as a Redeemer; His Second Coming either at our death or at the end of world as we know it; and His coming into our lives each time we step forward into genuine Christian living. As Catholics, this is decisively in the Holy Eucharist, in the other sacraments, and when we hear his Word and act on it.

The First Reading, taken from the prophet Daniel, cites the vision of the archangel Michael, sent to provide comfort and hope to the Israelites under persecution. This outpouring of consolation continues in the Second Reading as the author of the Book of Hebrews assures Christians not to lament over sin since the sacrifice of Jesus is supreme sacrifice for forgiveness of our transgressions — great reinforcement toward Holy Reconciliation!

The Gospel of Mark today is sometimes called “The Little Apocalypse,” (such as in *Revelation*). In this strong account, Mark continues the thesis of offering hope to those early persecuted Christians in the promise that Jesus will return gloriously. The Prophet Daniel and St. Mark continue to remind us that God will ensure that the righteous will not only survive the ordeal but find a place with Him.

Using the parable of the fig tree, Jesus warns us all to read the “*signs of the time*,” reminding us that we must continue to engage life more critically and wisely, preparing to give Jesus an account of our lives. We cannot know “*either the day or the hour*” of his Second Coming, but we *can* ponder our own mortality and our final days. In Nigeria, where many of my Christian countrymen are being persecuted for their faith, Mark can be a good evangelist for us. Lest we become despondent over our grieving loved ones, the terminally ill, remember that life does not end when our earthly existence comes to an end. Therefore, let us pray for the grace to stay strong, keeping the flame of our faith alive in Jesus.

As we contemplate this year’s Holy Advent, may we recognize the “second coming” of Jesus in our daily lives through the Eucharist, in the Word of God, in the sacraments, and in our day-to-day encounter with each other.

Blessed Sunday and Happy Thanksgiving!