

St Thomas and St Thomas of the Air Church
 Twenty Fifth Sunday after Trinity
 November 17, 2024
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“and they shall gather together his elect
 from the four winds,
 from one end of heaven to the other.”

Ok, I hear you say

Too much single malt for poor old Vicar McNeely
 Here we are in the 25th Sunday after Trinity
 And he read the Collect, Epistle and Gospel from the 6th and
 final Sunday in Epiphany.

Surely he needs a long vacation, better talk to Belinda

Usually no one notices, but here at St Thomas’
 where we are blessed with both intellect
 and the inquiring mind of St Thomas

I can’t get away with anything
 and so

I must explain why at end of Trinity
 we are reading the propers from Epiphany.

I assure you all is well.

There are always at least 24 Sundays after Trinity
 but when Easter is early
 (remember it is set by the moon)

Trinity is stretched and there can be 25 or even 26 Sundays
 after Trinity and before Advent begins.

And when Easter falls later,
 the Epiphany season can be as long as 6 Sundays.

With me so far?

And when Easter is early
 and the Trinity Season lengthened
 Epiphany is shortened.

In the 1600's
 a bright bishop came up with the solution:
 In order to fill in the extra Sundays in Trinity when we need them
 we borrow from the shortened Sundays in Epiphany when we
 don't.

So the 5th and 6th Sundays after Epiphany became known as the
 "wandering Sundays".

Sometimes they serve during Epiphany and sometimes in
 Trinity.

End of the Liturgics lesson for the day.

Aren't you glad you asked?

So today marks the near end of our 25 week

Trinity Season Survey of Essential Christian Doctrine

The Church directs us to the critical Doctrine

of the Second Coming of Jesus, the Christ.

Matthew takes us back to Jerusalem

To the Mount of Olives

Where Jesus and the Apostles have gone

a few days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Jesus knows what is coming.

And tells them of the doom of Jerusalem.

The Apostles had questions:

When would the calamity happen?

How will we know that it is coming?

What a moment.

The Apostles have perhaps inadvertently

Opened the door to the discussion of the end of the World.

To the time of Judgment, the Parousia, His Second Coming

Jesus gently works them into it.

Without detail,

He tells them there will be a time of tribulation.

He tells them,

Just as the lightning in the East shines to the West,
 (something they all knew)
 So will the coming of the Son of Man be.
 He will return in the clouds.

Jesus tells them and so tells us of His Second Coming.

Without directly answering their question about when it will
 happen

He tells them of celestial signs that will herald the end times.
 The sun will no longer give its light in the day.
 The moon will not shine at night
 And the stars shall fall from the heavens.
 And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

They will see His angels
 And hear the blast of the trumpet.
 And they will gather His elect from the four winds
 From throughout the world
 From one end of heaven to the other.

Those who believe on Him
 Those who have the sacraments of Christ
 Baptism and Holy Communion
 Those whose sins have been forgiven
 Will be freed from time and
 Will join Him in Paradise for eternity.

Those who have not
 Will suffer eternal perdition.
 Jesus will speak of the tribulation
 Clash of nations and between brothers.
 Famine and earthquake
 Betrayal and persecution

Evil will abound and love will grow cold.
The Apostles want more.
When Lord?

He tells them the apocalypse, the Parousia would come
But only the Father, the Creator
Knows the timing of the end times.

Since that time mankind has been watching for the signs.
Every generation has seen them.
When have there not been wars, famine, earthquake
Persecutions.
When has it not seemed as though evil abounds
And love grown cold?

We can think of those things today
And in the last 100 years.
Many have seen the signs in mankind.
Evil abounding and love growing cold.
Many a prophet
Many a preacher have staked their reputations on it
And been shamed.

So we know what is coming
We know the consequences to our lives
We know of eternity
We know of Heaven and
We know of Hell

What we don't know is when.

We live our lives as best we can.
Knowing that at any moment
This week
This day

Right now
 It could all begin.
 We will be judged on our deeds
 Our actions and inactions.
 On the absolution of our sins.
 And our future will be decided forever.

So we live ever mindful of His words.

We have done as Jesus said and received His two sacraments of salvation:

 Baptism and Communion.

And as St John wrote in today's Epistle:

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God”

 We are truly the loved Children of God.

Even with all that, John warns us

 “He who committeth sin is of the devil.
 For the devil sinneth from the beginning.”

We are not immune or shielded from the sin
 That can creep into our lives.

We spend the rest of our lives exercising our free will

 But, given our nature
 We will occasionally make mistakes
 Fail to follow His commandments
 Neglect our duty to others.

We live in a fallen world and are under constant threat of
 Temptation and the assaults of the evil one.

When he strikes, the only antidote is love and absolution.

 Seek ye first the church at the first hint of trouble.

The sacrament of confession and absolution is available to us all.

The Collect for today is exactly right.
We pray
That we may purify ourselves
That when He shall appear again with power and great glory
We may be made like unto Him
In His eternal and glorious Kingdom.

As we approach the Church Season of Advent in a few weeks,
We approach His coming at the Nativity
And we approach His Second Coming
We enter a mini-Lent
A time to examine our lives
To search out and remove the last vestige of tarnish
From our souls.

Now is the time to prepare ourselves.
He is coming.

