



# Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)  
November 14, 2021

## Do Everything Well

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The huge fresco behind the Sistine Chapel altar, *The Last Judgment*, may be the greatest representation of the coming of Christ at the end of time. The centerpiece of the composition is Christ the judge with the Virgin at his side represented in a halo, surrounded by a crowd of apostles, prophets, patriarchs, Old Testament heroines, martyrs, and saints who form a double crown of swirling bodies. Michelangelo painted hundreds of figures, all with exquisite attention to detail.

Just think, when Michelangelo was painting, his work in the chapel was destined to be seen by very few—the pope, his court, a few visiting kings

and diplomats at most. The Sistine Chapel would receive less foot traffic in Michelangelo's time than a medium- to small-sized parish today. Yet, Michelangelo painted with the same eye to perfection as if he knew his work would be seen by millions. He was not painting for the multitudes but for God and his patron, the pope.

Similarly, if we act with generosity and love, whether observed by millions or no one, we will follow the path to true freedom and love. We do what is right, not to be seen, but because we want to be true to God, ourselves, and others. Living like this, we will have no reason to fear the Last Judgment.

More than six million people annually see *The Last Judgment* in person, and countless more via broadcasts and social media. So do everything well, since it is seen by God and yourself—and maybe someday, by more eyes than you ever imagined! +

## Sunday Readings

### Daniel 12:1-3

Many of those who sleep / in the dust of the earth shall awake.

### Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God.

### Mark 13:24-32

[Jesus said,] "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory."

*Do what is right,  
not to be seen, but  
to be true to God,  
ourselves, and others.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

Please, make the homily brief, but prepare it well. And how do we prepare a homily, dear priests, deacons, bishops? How should it be prepared? With prayer, by studying the word of God and by making a clear and brief summary; it should not last more than ten minutes, please.

—General audience, February 7, 2018



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I worry too much about being seen by others?
- Do I console myself knowing that no good deed goes unrewarded?

# Endangered Species

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

The United States Environmental Protection Agency keeps a list of endangered animals. The list includes both specific animals that are protected by law and people and agencies who receive money to protect animals. For example, agencies for wolves in certain parts of the country receive special funding and programs to keep the beasts from diminishing in number. And thanks to efforts by thousands of people, hope lives for the wolf.

Our Church faces similar problems with traditions becoming extinct. But with knowledge comes hope.

I know of three retreat houses that closed this past year. Maybe it's just a sign of the times. Retreat houses are in retreat. Religious that staffed retreat houses are fewer and aging. The cost of running a retreat or spirituality center is astronomical. Retreat houses have been sold to help dioceses and religious orders pay their bills. We are losing this great tradition amazingly quickly and with little notice. I wonder if the Church should have an organization responsible for conservation and preservation.

A good spiritual director is very difficult to find. Retreat houses used to cultivate them. Centers for spirituality somehow multiplied them. As clergy and religious get older and let go of ministries that were once staples of Catholic life, we must do more than just chronicle their final days. Someone needs to intervene and take action to hold on to what's



worth saving. Here are a few suggestions for the Church's endangered species list.

**Retreat houses** offer a place of quiet and solitude away from the everyday and ordinary. The number of retreat houses has fallen, but the desire for the experience has not. At some point in our lives, we all need to be alone with God. A parish-based, low-cost retreat program can't exactly replace an eight-, ten-, or thirty-day trek through the spiritual exercises, but it can help keep the tradition alive, maybe in a new way.

**The religious articles store is gone!** There used to be one or two brick-and-mortar stores in a community where one could buy rosaries, prayer books, first Communion cards, and statues.

That business has gravitated to an online storefront. Personally, I need to hold a rosary before I buy it. I can't get that experience with online shopping.

**The inner-city priest** is everything to everyone. I have been blessed to know some great inner-city priests. These men are mentors, social-justice gurus, prayer partners, linguists, city planners, community organizers, social workers, and therapists, and they still have plenty of time for Mass and the sacraments. The seminary doesn't train men for this anymore, but it should. What will we do when they and their valuable pastoral and ministerial skills are gone?

There is so much in the Church that is in danger of becoming a distant memory. There is so much worth saving. Keeping the faith alive requires the hard work of saving some tried and true treasures of our Catholic tradition. +

*We must do something  
to save our precious  
traditions from extinction.*

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I am grateful you  
keep me safe in your love.  
You are my hope.  
Help me to trust you.*

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

November 15–20

**Monday, Weekday:** 1 Mc 1:10–15, 41–43,  
54–57, 62–63 / Lk 18:35–43

**Tuesday, Weekday:** 2 Mc 6:18–31 / Lk 19:1–10

**Wednesday, St. Elizabeth of Hungary:**  
2 Mc 7:1, 20–31 / Lk 19:11–28

**Thursday, Weekday:**

1 Mc 2:15–29 / Lk 19:41–44

**Friday, Weekday:**

1 Mc 4:36–37, 52–59 / Lk 19:45–48

**Saturday, Weekday:**

1 Mc 6:1–13 / Lk 20:27–40

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