

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!



The culmination of our stewardship/commitment weekend has seen good results based on many of your responses. This is one important way we build up the Body of Christ, and so look forward to the fresh energy the Holy Spirit brings to these new stewardship roles. As we remember the Veterans this weekend, let us not forget to pray for those men and women who paid the ultimate price for the freedom we are enjoying today. May their families and peers draw comfort from our affections for them. Amen. With the culmination of liturgical year B next Sunday, the Church's liturgies we celebrate during this month are arranged towards the eschatological end. How amazing that we live in an age that continues to be steeped in mysteries and meanings know fully only by God.

Our readings this weekend emphasize the rich ways we can describe 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 chiefly found in the Holy Eucharist, then in the other sacraments, and when we hear his Word. The first reading occurs with the vision of the archangel Michael, taken from the prophet Daniel, sent to provide comfort and hope to the Israelites under persecution. As Christians, we are urged not to lament over sin since Jesus' supreme sacrifice offered us a way out, which he merited for us.

The Gospel of Mark today continues the same thesis: offering hope to the early Christians who were being persecuted. Mark uses the promise of Jesus to assure them that he will return gloriously again with great power as Judge, to gather and reward his elect. Daniel and Mark continue to remind us that God will ensure that the righteous will survive the ordeal, finding a place with Him. Jesus gives us hope, yet at the same time reminds us that we must be always prepared to give an account of our lives when He returns in glory as our Judge. We do not know when, thus we are to be ready at all times. In Nigeria where many Christians are being persecuted for their faith, Mark is a good evangelist for us. To those grieving loved ones and to those facing death, life does not end when our earthly existence comes to an end, therefore let us be strong and keep the flame of our faith alive in Jesus. At this very time, every Christian should be filled with hope, not fear, expectation, not apprehension.

Although other faith communities would have us develop fear and trembling around 'second-coming' events, we know that as Catholic Christians, we can always look to our beloved Church and the profound calm that surrounds her. As we contemplate this year's Holy Advent, let us recall Sister Lucia at Fatima: As our Lady told us at Fatima, "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph." God is giving two last remedies to the world: the Holy Rosary and Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Blessed Sunday!