

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

People understand their gods in many ways. There is the divine architect who created the world and then adopted a hands-off policy. God may be a judge who marks down our daily progress and failures. He may be an impersonal leader who takes no interest in any of us.

Today's readings argue with those images. They reveal a God who is interested in the joys and sorrows of human existence. They tell of a God who is involved in the crises of human life. Our God is a caring God.

The first reading offers hope and consolation to the faithful Jewish community persecuted by the Syrian king of 165 BC. Although evil prevails, the power of good will triumph. Israel's guardian angel Michael tells of the resurrection of the dead: some will have everlasting life, while others will encounter shame and everlasting contempt. This is the God who cares, who will deliver them.

The psalmist, in most cases king David, sees the ever-presence of God. His fate is tied to Him. Through the pain and suffering, he feels himself even closer to God. Even when God seems least understandable, the psalmist still feels that God is concerned with the needs of the people. God remains his portion and his cup because God is seen to have no choice but to provide for and protect Israel. Even in mortal danger, God will offer security. This pervading presence of God makes existence a celebration. God is a caring God.

In the Gospel, Mark makes two things clear: Jesus will fulfill prophecies about the end of time, and the disciples should not be troubled about when the end time will occur. Only the Father knows. At the end time, cosmic signs will signal Christ's arrival. He will send his angels to gather the elect from the ends of the earth. Our God is a caring God.