

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**August 11, 2019**

***“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you unto myself, so that where I am you also may be.”*** (John 14:2-3)

Christ’s return; The Second Coming, has been a debated topic for almost 2000 years. The reading from John’s Gospel that I provided is one of many references to this blessed event that is to come. The Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation have been read and interpreted by many scholars, philosophers and theologians alike, providing us with a view of this event.

Predictions regarding a time-line of WHEN, based on the chain of events that some see outlined in scripture, have remained at the center of this ongoing debate. Stories of war and rumors of war, signs in the sky, rapture, trial and tribulation run the gambit. We hear of an anti-christ who will put all mankind to the test. You only have to turn on your T.V. to see what I’m talking about.

This morning, I am not concerned with this time-line. I don’t want to dig deep into WHAT we should be looking for. I want to discuss the HOW. What should we be doing? Today’s Gospel passage from Luke, along with most of the rest of Jesus’ teaching, points us toward the answer.

In the early Church, Christ’s faithful prayed one word: “MARANATHA.” This word was their key watchword and most fervent prayer. They had heard Jesus’ teaching, such as the quote from John’s Gospel I provided, and many examples throughout all four Gospels. What was this prayer? What is the meaning of “MARANATHA?”

“MARANATHA” is taken from an Aramaic word which is the combination of two words, “marana – tha”, literally meaning “Come, Lord!” In St. Paul’s time, it was a common greeting between persecuted Christians. It often replaced the normal greeting exchanged within the Jewish community, “Shalom” (meaning “peace”). Early Christians believed that peace would not come to them until Christ’s return. Jesus had told them so. Recall the words from Matthew’s Gospel in chapter 10, verse 34: ***“Do not think that I have come to bring peace but the sword.”***

Today’s Gospel passage counsels us that, just as the faithful servant was prepared for his master’s return, we too must be prepared. We are charged to be ever alert, faithful to the Master’s command, clothed properly and with our lamps lit.

Let us join with our early Christian forebears in the words found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 671: *“That is why Christians pray, above all in the Eucharist, to hasten Christ’s return by saying to him,*

***MARANATHA! Our Lord, Come!”***