

32nd Sunday (A)

- Are you a crisis orientated person?
- A crisis orientated person acts best under severe pressure; they get into action at the very last minute.
- A crisis orientated person begins a diet two days before buying new clothes or going to a wedding; a crisis orientated person starts working on his or her taxes just before they're due to be fined; a crisis orientated person is still shopping for Christmas on December 26th.
- I suppose all of us tend to let certain obligations slip & then find ourselves scrambling, but there are some obligations in our lives where we don't have the right to assume that a better, more convenient time might be possible than now.
- There are truly important & central things in life that we really need to act upon when the opportunity presents itself & perhaps this can be the silver lining of the Pandemic during which we may have had to focus on the priorities of our relationships with those we love & on what are the truly meaningful things that clarify for me my identity – who am & want to be.
- Getting to know our children, healing divisions when they come up in our families, coming to realize the presence & activity of God in our lives, are all matters of urgency.
- Life is very short - Children become adults too quickly.
- One moment you are holding your first baby, then, before you know it while you still consider yourself a young man or woman, you are holding your first grandchild.
- At one moment we begin our careers, & then before you know it we are planning our retirement.
- Life here on earth comes to an end much sooner than any of us expect.
- This is certainly evident when we hear about the death of a young man or woman, but even the deaths of our parents or grandparents well into their 80's or 90's is a shock to us as we try to contemplate life without them sitting in their chair on Christmas Day having a drink & celebrating their family.
- The Gospel reading is telling us - make the best use of the time we have been given – it is truly precious.
- We can't be putting off to a more convenient time our opportunities to respond to God. These opportunities may never arise again.
- Some of them may seem quite minor, but actually they can have an enormous positive effect on others & upon our whole relationship with God.
- It is about planning for the future & pacing oneself to see that one has a future to enjoy; it's about working out priorities & making judgements on how to respond to situations that present themselves in our lives.
- Tragically, some people are so anxious about their future that they try & control it & everyone associated with it. It's always a disaster.

- The early church thought Jesus would return quickly; there was a crisis of faith when he didn't.
- Some Christians lived as though this imminent return was a fact, but we are still waiting.
- The Gospel tells us that the Christian life is about wisdom, right judgment & reading the signs of the times.
- The best way to prepare for the future is to let go of the unhealed past, as best as we can, & live in the here & now – it can be called the sacrament of the present moment – the circumstance in which we can encounter God.
- The Holy Spirit helps us see what needs to be done today & what preparation is necessary for tomorrow.
- This is such simple & sound advice & yet many of us don't heed it.
- Some of us can be consumed by the hurt & pain of our past, or to be overwhelmed by the future.
- We can be so absorbed by the guilt or pain or bitterness of the past, or constantly living with anxiety about the future, that we never really live, because we never live in the now.
- Alcoholics Anonymous sums it up neatly when it tells us to take life 'one day at a time' which is another way of saying what Matthew's community came to see, 'keep awake because you know not the time or place'.
- When we do that which we know within our hearts is the right, Christian way of acting, we are not just doing a good deed, we are responding to God.
- His presence in our lives transforms our actions to such an extent that the effects of our actions have infinite value & the results of these actions continue forever.
- But, opportunities pass & sometimes, when opportunities are not taken advantage of, they never appear again.
- A feature of Christian faith is an approach to life that views the future with hope.
- In our world today many people look to the future with distrust & even fear.
- As Christians, we can look forward with hope.
- When change occurs, some allow that change to happen *to* them whilst others engage in the change process and approach it with hope and expectation.
- Today's gospel reminds us to be ready for what the future holds; to look with hope towards what lies ahead, but to ensure that we've prepared ourselves properly.
- The future can only be viewed with expectant hope if we've done the proper preparation!
- Today we ask God to help us transform our lives so we may make the best use of the time he gives us to encounter him & bring his presence to the world.