

Reflection on the Painting

In today's Gospel reading Jesus says: 'I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved.' He thus tells us that the Old Testament is divinely inspired Scripture, and should continue to be seen as the Word of God. It is the 'till heaven and earth disappear', though, that we are concentrating on in our artwork. The painting on the front cover of this order of service illustrates the Last Day of Pompeii, probably similar to what the end of time would look like. It is a very large (456 × 651 cm) history painting by Russian artist, Karl Bryullov, produced in 1830, depicting the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD. Pompeii was under active excavation in the early 19th century, and after the artist visited the site, he gave this magnificent rendering of what it must have been like on the last day of Pompeii. He has filled the canvas with authentic detail from Pompeii that he had seen at the site and in the museum at Naples, such as the artefacts carried by the figures and the authentic paving and kerb stones. Statues toppling from their pedestals bring additional drama, demonstrating the sublime power of nature over man. What is interesting is that most figures depicted preserve their dignity in the face of death. In the right corner of the painting, there is a young man helping his mother to get up and continue their escape. This represents Pliny, an actual survivor, who managed to escape Pompeii in time and shared his experience about the tragic night.

Looking at this painting we can feel the ground shaking. The dark skies, lit by fire and lava, are descending on humanity. Nature is in charge. Hard to imagine what the end of days would be like, but I am sure it is probably not too far off this scene. The fact that we don't know when the end of time will be, should bring humility to us as believers. God knows the timing. We don't. In the meantime, Jesus tells us to observe all the teachings in the Old and New Testaments. So each day is a sacred gift of life in the face of the end of time... and eternity.

¶ A Corporate Preparation for Mass

The Priest enters in silence, genuflects, and kneels facing the altar

After a period of silent recollection ...

All I will go to the altar of God
to the God of my joy and gladness.

Give judgement for me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people:
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
All **For you are the God of my refuge;**
why have you cast me from you,
and why do I so heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?

O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me:
and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.
All **That I may go to the altar of God,**
to the God of my joy and gladness;
and on the lyre I will give thanks to you, O God my God.

Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul,
and why are you so disquieted within me?
All **O put your trust in God;**
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

I will go to the altar of God.
All **To the God of my joy and gladness.**

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

† In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All **Amen.**

Let my steps be guided by your promise; may evil never rule me.

The Greeting

The Lord our redeemer be with you
All **and also with you.**

The service is introduced

Prayers of Penitence

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

A period of silent reflection

Confession

All **Almighty God,**
long-suffering and of great goodness:
I confess to you,
I confess with my whole heart
my neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments,
my wrong doing, thinking, and speaking;
the hurts I have done to others,
and the good I have left undone.
O God, forgive me,
for I have sinned against you;
and raise me to newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Kyries

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me:
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your Holy Spirit from me:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive † you your sins
and make you holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray.

O Lord, grant that, schooled through Lenten observance
and nourished by your word,
through holy restraint may we be devoted to you with all our heart
and for ever united in prayer.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Reader A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

See, just as the Lord my God has charged me, I now teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

'But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.'

All This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 147:13-end

Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion;
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates
and has blest your children within you.
He has established peace in your borders
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

All Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem.

He sends forth his command to the earth
and his word runs very swiftly.
He gives snow like wool
and scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.
He casts down his hailstones like morsels of bread;
who can endure his frost?

All Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem.

He sends forth his word and melts them;
he blows with his wind and the waters flow.
He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and judgements to Israel.
He has not dealt so with any other nation;
they do not know his laws.

All Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 5:17-19

Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
I am the light of the world, saying the Lord,
anyone who follows me will have the light of life.

All Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.

All Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

All This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

A brief word about this evening's readings

Prayers of the Faithful

We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things
and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

After each petition

Lord, meet us in the silence.
All Give us strength and hear our prayer.

After the final petition

God our Father,
in your love and goodness
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence
with prayer, fasting and generosity;
accept our Lenten discipline,
and when we fall by our weakness,
raise us up by your unfailing mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
All and also with you.

As you are able, let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

The Offertory

The altar is prepared

Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord, accept the prayers of your people
along with these sacrificial offerings,
and defend those who celebrate your mysteries from every kind of danger.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now we give you thanks
because you give us the spirit of discipline,
that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace,
as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery
with mind and heart renewed.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Christ is the bread of life:

All **When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit,
inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

All **Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

The Lord's Prayer

Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins
and bring us to forgive those who sin against us:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

No one shall live on bread alone:
All **The word of God is life for all.**
By the word of God were the heavens made:
All **The word of God is life for all.**
Speak the word, Lord, and we shall be healed:
All **The word of God is life for all.**

Agnus Dei

All **Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Giving of Communion

You will show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Spiritual Communion – *for those at home*

It is an ancient practice of the Church that, when you are prevented from attending the Holy Eucharist, people are invited to express, in the words of St Thomas Aquinas, “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.” Therefore, during this time you are invited to pray this prayer, which may be said as often as you desire:

Act of Reception

**All In union, blessed Jesus,
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,**

(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)

**I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,
for creation and all the blessings of this life,
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,
and resurrection,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.**

(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)

**I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,
I pray you to come into my heart.
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,
my soul, and my mind.
Let nothing separate me from you;
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.
Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

O God, give to your people a resolve that is pleasing to you,
for, by conforming to your teachings,
you bestow on them your eternal favour.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

**God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed with your holy word
and we look forward to the day when we may together
receive you in the sacrament of the eucharist.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our Lenten journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

¶ Sending Out

**All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.**

The Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**