

Even before we turned our clocks back an hour – it was getting darker earlier and earlier, and we experienced some cooler weather --- and now have flipped our calendars to November – already!

Soon it will be Advent and the beginning of a new year in the Church –a special year of mercy – and then a month later a new calendar year of 2016 – already!

Before we get to the end – so we can start anew – the Church will have us focus the next two Sundays on the end times – when the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky – or so St. Mark will tell us. . .

But before we get to the gloom and doom – we have a few Sundays of preparation – two that have already past, and then today. We need to prepare ourselves so that we don't stumble around as Pilate will in our Gospel for Christ the King – when he wonders who Jesus is – and what he stands for.

NO--- long before the end times come for us: either when the world ends for us all – or when we draw our last breath – we need to have this figured out. We need to know who Jesus is and what he stands for – so we know whether or not we follow after Jesus – and stand for the same values he stands for . . . or, we do not.

So in our Sundays of preparation – we met Bartimaeus: who in leaving his cloak behind – literally left all his earthly possessions – and with enthusiasm, went to Jesus. Such need, such urgency, such conviction did Bartimaeus have. . .

Bartimaeus knew who Jesus was, humbly asked Jesus for what he needed (not what he wanted), received his request – and then eagerly followed after Jesus.

We are called to be like Bartimaeus!

Last Sunday, on the feast of All Saints, we encountered a few holy men and women as Noah's Nonna introduced him to St. Christopher, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Monica.

The Saints, we learned, are those who realize how much God loves them. And because they realize this, they live their lives in gratitude – using their God-given gifts and talents to do something special with their lives to help those around them.

We are called to be like the Saints!

Then in this, our third and final week of preparation – we meet another special person – the poor widow giving her two coins to the temple treasury. Jesus holds her up as a model of discipleship.

In the Gospel story today – Jesus teaches the crowds to beware of the hypocrisy of the scribes – who know God's word and law – yet seek places of honor and hurt those whom the law demands they protect – like widows, orphans and strangers.

Jesus condemns the scribes severely: and calling his disciples to himself, he teaches them that they are not to be like the scribes – but like the widow, who gives all she has.

True disciples give all they have - -their whole livelihood – not just their goods or possessions --- but *themselves*.

The *amount* of what we have and what we give is really not important at all in the long run. What is important is how we regard and care for others; how we fulfill our responsibilities in the community; how we embrace the unlimited possibilities of deeper relationships, new riches, and everlasting life.

Without calculating the cost to herself, the widow gave “all she had”, not out of her surplus. Disciples, too, give all they have without counting the cost, calculating self-gain, or seeking attention.>>

The amazing thing about faithful discipleship is that God provides us with astonishing surplus of protection, of talents, and of blessings. The committed disciple give their very selves – the gift which God has already given them. Ultimately, discipleship is about good stewardship of who we are – and what we stand for.

So while it may be understandable that Pilate will stumble around in a couple of weeks – because he doesn't know who Jesus is and what Jesus stands for --- it would not be understandable for us --- If we are like Bartimaeus. If we are like the Saints. And If we are like poor widow giving her two coins at the temple. *May our prayer always be that God give us the grace we need – to be the people he is calling us to be!*