**Homily for December 1st 2024 Luke 21:25-36 “Beyond Distress and Confusion”**

*Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."**Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

To verses quite metric I turn on this morn,

as Christians prepare for their Lord to be born;

and Advent begins, with solemnity broad,

and the story from Luke, the returning of God.

Jesus is speaking, predicting the day

when all of the old earthly forms fade away,

a time of great tumult, a time of great strife,

the conclusion of Death, and the Advent of Life.

The way it is told, it sounds just horrific,

and scary, and awful, to be more specific;

signs in the heavens, distress, and great fear,

and all of this signals the end time is near.

Year in and year out, this sad story repeated,

 we’re all too aware that we’re feeling depleted;

 deprived of contentment, overwhelmed and afraid,

 forgetting the strong stuff of which we were made!

’Cause there’s just so much verbiage, it all sounds like static,

with story and signs leaning melodramatic;

and in all that maelstrom, it’s easy to miss,

the challenging good news of salvation and bliss.

In the midst of our tumult, instead of succumbing,

believers are asked for a feat quite mind-numbing;

we’re asked to stand tall, raise our heads, and rejoice,

and listen *within* for God’s redemptive voice.

For *that* is the point of this crazy confusion,

an end to despair, and to panic, conclusion;

for however bad this old world gets to seeming,

our focus, instead, is upon its redeeming.

Now that’s a tall order! The news keeps us scared,

with shootings and bombings and evil prepared;

it seems like the world can’t keep going this way,

with great dissipation and full disarray,

But faithful, we hold to the truth as we know it,

and none less than Jesus was pleased to bestow it;

for just as the darkness is deepest ‘fore dawn,

the Light, and the morning’s what we focus on.

The trouble? It’s real, and the danger is too,

but unlike the ostrich we find in the zoo,

we lift *up* our heads, and we *open* our eyes,

as we wait on our God who does *ever* surprise.

So, instead of bewailing the world’s sorry state,

*this* story would urge us instead contemplate

the ending of evil; and make an exemption,

that instead of all that, we embrace our redemption!

And if we did *that*, oh, so different a story,

where Love conquers Fear, and our new repertory

would be songs of deliverance, and tales of delight,

when, with darkness behind us, we turn towards the Light!

On verses quite metric I‘ve leaned on this morn,

as Christians prepare for their Lord to be born;

and Advent begins, with solemnity broad,

and believers look forward to the returning of God! Amen.