

The last three Sundays of the Church Year point the faithful to the coming of our Lord Christ in Glory and Judgment. The Church prepares for His coming by hearing the last three Gospel readings of the Church Year, all of which are from the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

The Gospel reading for the **Third-Last Sunday in the Church Year**, Matthew 24:15-28, recounts our Lord's teaching on the antichrist, and the "abomination of desolation" who comes to lead astray the Church of God. In the Last Days the persecution of the Church will grow, to the extent that no flesh would be saved, but for the sake of the elect, our Lord will come as a thief in the night and cut those days short.

The Gospel reading for the **Second-Last Sunday in the Church Year**, Matthew 25:31-46, is our Lord's teaching on the final judgment as He speaks the Parable of the sheep and the goats. Now the flock is mixed, the visible church populated with believers and unbelievers. On the Last Day the Lord Himself will separate the flock, those without faith going to everlasting punishment, those righteous by faith in Jesus Christ into eternal life.

The Gospel reading for the **Last Sunday in the Church Year**, Matthew 25:1-13, again focuses on salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and the unexpected nature of our Lord's Return in Glory. Our Lord likens the Kingdom of Heaven to ten virgins, five wise, and five foolish. The wise virgins lie down in faith, the foolish without faith. Suddenly the Lord returns, and those who laid down in faith are ushered into the Wedding Feast. Those without faith are locked out for eternity.

While the appointed Gospel readings for these three Sundays include strong Law, still for the Christian there is great hope and comfort. Our Lord will return, as He has promised, to sunder His Church from this vale of tears and take Her to Her heavenly home. The Christian can look through the tribulations and suffering of these days to that glorious day when our Lord says to you "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Cover Art – *Christ Returns In Glory*

An Illumination from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, c. 1416 A.✠ D.

The *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* is an ornate medieval Book of Hours counted by some as the most beautiful ever produced. The book was made for Jean, Duc de Berry, the son of King John II of France. The illustrations were painted by the Limbourg Brothers from 1413 to 1416. A few panels were completed 70 years later by Jean Colombe.

The Last Sundays



Of the Church Year