

NOVEMBER 26 BISHOP GARY GORDON

Well, my dear family, sisters and brothers in Christ,

Just to leave a few words of reflection on the word of God to us today.

There's probably a line that we may have picked up in the first reading, the book of Daniel: “*the writing is on the wall.*” We've all heard that saying before— “*The writing is on the wall.*” And it is a reference back to this passage of scripture when the hand appears on the plaster of the palace and writes these famous words predicting an end to the king and his government and, indeed, his nation as it will be divided.

And so, this time of the year, the end of the church year, we could say, in many ways, the scriptures before us over these last couple of weeks—even the feast of Christ the King—they speak to us in a way as the writing on the wall. Are we able to see and read the signs of the times? It was an invitation that came out of the Second Vatican Council as it was observing the world. And so, it was a deep and real invitation to always be looking at the signs of the times.

And perhaps there's maybe two ways to do this. First of all, we know that Jesus said very clearly if you try to take the speck out of somebody else's eye you gotta see the log in your own. So, signs of the times—what do I need to work on? What in my life do I have to hit the reset button in terms of my prayer life, in terms of my love of neighbour, in terms of my treatment and kindness to my family? And there's always something. There's always

something to work on. So that's... the end of the church year gives us that opportunity. It's a bit of a reset.

And one of the great things that maybe is a real invitation today—who in my family, or who do I know, that I believe might be lonely or isolated? Um, it was both Pope Francis and Pope Leo, and formerly Pope Benedict, and Mother Teresa a long time ago, who said, “*Isolation is the greatest poverty on the earth.*” Interesting when we've got all this social communication—Isolation. So, is there someone in my family, someone that I know, someone in my neighbourhood that, perhaps, just needs a call? Um, maybe a text. But let's reach out in person, take a moment. Maybe it's a reset—to address the loneliness in my own family, in my own neighbourhood. A kind of a reset of the meaning of the gospel.

The second great thing that we're invited to in looking at the signs of the times—when I watch the news, and... I mean, who isn't watching the news? Or at least listening to it, or perhaps picking it up online. What's my reaction? What's going on in my heart? Do I get a sense of rage or outrage? Or do I feel a sense of compassion and empathy? Do I think of the news and the things that I see that are so often, you know, just so devastating to nations, to people, to even in our own cities? What's my reaction? Is it the reaction of our loving and merciful God, looking with compassion and healing? Or am I reacting in a kind of bitterness or anger?

I think that would be a great reset for our lives so that we maintain the peace. And perhaps the great gift that we've got as Christian people—our reaction should be, first of all, let's say a prayer. Why

not just respond with a '*Hail Mary*' or a '*Glory Be*' for that situation?

So I leave it with you as we enter into these final days of the church year. May our God help us to have a reset of our spiritual life and of our relationship with family and with neighbour, and with our world. God bless you.

Inspired by the Gospel today in which Jesus assures us that the Spirit gives us strength and testimony even in hardship.