



Are you ready for the bus?

Read: Mark 13:24-32

One winter the town of Lanigan decided to start a bus route for its students. This was exciting news because it meant we no longer had to trudge across town in the snow and cold to get to school. Unfortunately, despite my mother’s protests, I missed the bus the first day it came. I was preoccupied with my own interests and was completely unprepared. It drove off, leaving me behind. I will never forget walking to school that day. Ever.

In the gospel Jesus describes his return at the end of time. But Jesus’ warning isn’t really about the end of the world; it is about being ready for it. His narrative reminds me of the school bus. In other words, Jesus is saying, the bus is coming, be prepared. Jesus uses the analogy of the fig tree to make this point.

The fig tree is known as the watching tree. It is the first tree to bloom in spring and signals the end of winter. Nothing we can do will prevent the seasons from changing. But we can, with God’s help, be prepared for it. This requires us to be on the lookout. We need to be attentive to the changes in our spiritual growth, monitoring them to make sure we are growing closer to God. We know the bus is coming and that means we need to develop a strategy that enables us to get ready. We need a spiritual plan.

Thankfully, the Bible gives us the perfect strategy. We read, “the end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit” (1 Peter 4:7). We need to evaluate our actions and judge whether or not they bring us closer to God or farther away from him. We must have the strength of mind to put distractions aside, recognizing that they won’t help us make the bus on time.

The Bible also teaches us to “stand firm in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13), study the bus schedule, “devote yourselves to prayer”, know the driver, (Col. 4:2) “and repent” (Rev. 3:3), get rid of the distractions that prevent us from getting out the door on time.

No one wants to miss the bus. But so often we are lost in our own little worlds and aren’t getting ready. When the bus arrives, it catches us unprepared and we end up missing it. Jesus doesn’t want us to miss the bus. He gives us plenty of warning. But we are the ones who need to be prepared, because the bus “is near.”

Reflection: How can I increase my understanding of the Catholic faith? How can I create more time for prayer? What prevents you from being ready for the bus?

Discipleship Challenge: Pick an area of your life where you are struggling to be the best version of yourself. Be intentional about changing your actions, asking for God’s help.