Readings for November 15

First Reading: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the LORD as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the LORD.

7 Be silent before the Lord GOD,
for the day of the LORD is at hand!
The LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
he has consecrated his guests.

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who settle like dregs in wine,
those who say in their hearts,
"The LORD will not do good,
nor will he do harm."
13 Their wealth shall be plundered
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

14 The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the warrior cries aloud there.
15 That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

17 I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust
and their flesh like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold

will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed,
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm: Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. (Ps. 90:12)

1 Lord, you have | been our refuge
from one generation | to another.
2 **Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were born,**
from age to age | you are God.
3 You turn us back to the | dust and say,
"Turn back, O child- | ren of earth."
4 **For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past**
and like a watch | in the night; R
5 you sweep them away | like a dream,
they fade away suddenly | like the grass:
6 **in the morning it is | green and flourishes;**
in the evening it is dried | up and withered.
7 For we are consumed | by your anger;
we are afraid because | of your wrath.
8 **Our iniquities you have | set before you,**
and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance. R
[9 When you are angry, all our | days are gone;
we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.
10 **The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength | even eighty;**
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and | we are gone.
11 Who regards the power | of your wrath?
Who rightly fears your | indignation?
] 12 **So teach us to num- | ber our days**
that we may apply our | hearts to wisdom. R

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not
need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well
that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say,
"There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them,
as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!
4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise
you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we
are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So, then, let us not fall asleep as others
do, but let us keep awake and be sober, 7 for those who sleep sleep at night,
and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the
day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a
helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for
obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that
whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore
encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey,
summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave
five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.
Then he went away. At once 16 the one who had received the five talents
went off and traded with them and made five more talents. 17 In the same
way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one
who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and
hid his master's money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves came
and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five
talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you
handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' 21 His
master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter
into the joy of your master.' 22 And the one with the two talents also came
forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have
made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and
trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you
in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the one
who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew
that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering
where you did not scatter, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent
in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You
wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow
and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my

money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. [29] For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. [30] As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”