33rd-C

MDP of God

A series of movies that was very popular a few years ago, was the Indiana Jones series.

They were adventure movies

Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark; Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom; Indiana Jones; the last Crusade; Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.

There were all kinds of things that happened to him – There was a huge boulder rolling after him [could crush him] – thrown into a pit filled with snakes; fighting the Nazi’s who were in a caravan [him against dozens of soldiers] – on and on over the four movies

*But you always knew* Indiana Jones was going to be okay

He might get bit by a few snakes – he might tip over a jeep or two- he might be caught by the bad guys and locked up for awhile; the bad guys might have him tied up and after a certain amount of time something is supposed to happen that would kill him – he might get bruised up or wounded- he might get very close to a spinning airplane propeller- or have a guy twice as big as him holding him on the ground about to kill him

*All those things made the movie exciting*, **but you knew**- he was going to be fine

He was the hero of the story – nothing too bad was going to happen to him

My friends, Jesus today tells us His faithful followers – that our lives might at times be a little like an Indiana Jones movie

The fact is God, *with our cooperation* is writing the story of our lives—and we need of course to **prepare ourselves** to come face to face with Him

For His **faithful** people –that is those who prepare well to come into His presence-- we’re one of the hero’s of the story [if we’re not faithful we could end up like a bit player in other people’s stories ---you know what happens to the bit actors in the Indiana Jones stories right?- *They don’t end up too good*]

But if we’re **faithful** – we’re in ***some*** ways the hero of our story [obviously, Jesus is the bottom line hero in **everybody’s story**]

And Jesus is telling us that just like Indiana Jones we are going to face fearful situations—we are going to have trials and struggles—we are going to face danger at times and face losses

*But for those who are faithful*—**for those who prepare themselves with His grace to come into His presence**---just like Indiana Jones—*we’re going to be fine*

In fact we’re going to be more than fine—because we’ll be with Him in heaven and everything will be incredible

We just have to be prepared

Now to reflect a little more on how we can choose to be a hero of our story—in other words how we can in God’s view be one of the faithful—in other words—how we can be prepared to meet Him in all His glory—I’d like to invite our seminarian intern –Dave Verbsky to come forward

The following is from Dave Verbsky—our seminarian intern

In 1845 a British expedition set sail from the Canadian arctic in an attempt to find a trade route to the Pacific Ocean. They faced harsh winds, subzero temperatures and the possibility that their ships might get stuck in ice from all sides. The journey, if successful, would take over a year.

How did they prepare? They packed the essentials – a 1200 book library in case of boredom, a hand-organ, fine china, and cut glass wine goblets. They were well prepared for a party but poorly prepared for the arctic environment. All 138 men froze to death when their ships got stuck in the ice.

This story is a grim reminder of the consequences of being unprepared.

We hear in today’s first reading of a fateful day when the Lord will come in justice. Those who follow the Lord, who are prepared, will have cause for joy. Those who are unprepared will not. The most important question for each of us is: how can we prepare to meet the Lord?

Unlike the explorers, we don’t know when the Lord will return, when the time for preparation will expire. Many groups, both Christian and otherwise have tried to predict the end of the world. So far, all of them have been wrong. Today’s gospel has been interpreted as speaking of the end of the world, not just the destruction of the temple. It talks about all kinds of warning signs that will happen, "nations rising against nation, powerful earthquakes and famines and plague, signs in the sky." We hear that all of these things will happen, but they have happened and are still happening. Jesus didn’t give us the information necessary to know when he will come again.

While the timing of the return of Jesus is unknown, we can be certain of one thing – we all have an expiration date. Our lives will come to an end one day, and then we will meet Jesus. How should we prepare?

We all prepare for possible dangers in our daily lives. We buckle our seat belts to prepare for a possible crash. We carry insurance to cover unexpected expenses. Some people go further, setting aside food, water, and supplies for a possible end of the world as we know it scenario. We put time and effort into preparing for dangers we may never face. Do we prepare to meet the Lord in the same way?

I heard a story about a priest from the diocese of Erie who asked his school children if they wanted to go to the state championship for football. When they replied yes he said, how are you going to prepare for that? They said we will practice hard three hours a day so that we are ready to meet our opponents. He then asked them, do you want to go to heaven when you die? They all replied yes. He asked, what are you doing to prepare? Well, we go to church once a week (if we feel like it) and we pray (if we feel like it). Notice the inconsistency? These students are not unique in spending much more time and effort preparing for a possible situation – state championship, than for a known reality – eternity.

So how do we prepare? We don't have to wait to meet Jesus- we can get to know Jesus now. Jesus wants to be in relationship with us. Every time we come to mass and we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we are preparing to spend eternity with him. Every time we confess our sins and receive forgiveness we are preparing for eternity. Every minute spent in prayer is preparation. Every act of love, as great as giving one's life as a martyr or a simple as a smile, is preparation. Jesus warns us in the Gospel that preparation will be challenging at times, that living life as a Christian will involve suffering. He says "you will be hated by all because of my name." Yet we have a reason for hope, for if we keep trying to Love Jesus and love others, we hear that "by your perseverance, you will secure your lives." Jesus wants us to be ready to meet him, and he never tires of meeting us with mercy when we fall short. Let us prepare well, so that we may look forward to that final meeting with hope and not with fear. Are you ready?