

In the movie “The Bucket List,” Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman are two unlikely roommates in a hospital. Both are given six months to live. One of the characters puts together a list based on a philosophy assignment he received 45 years ago - what things would he do if he discovered that he was going to die soon. His roommate finds the list, and the two of them decide to go on a no-holds-barred trip around the world including such once-in-a-lifetime events as skydiving, racing expensive sports cars, flying over the North Pole, and going on an African safari ... to name a few.

These two men, with very different values and beliefs; yet both sharing a terminal diagnoses, add things to each others lists - testing their mettle and make-up; and often pushing the other to things that they don't necessarily find fun or entertaining.

Since the movie was released 9 years ago, the term “Bucket List” has entered the popular vernacular as things to do before you kick the bucket - things you never got around to doing - things you'd always wanted to do, but never had the time to do ... or just maybe didn't have the guts to do.

People usually talk about their bucket lists as an ice-breaker ... as a way to meet new people ... or in a more serious vein, to evaluate their lives at a point of transition.

In the First Reading, we hear the familiar story of Jonah; who tells the people of the city of Nineveh: “*Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed.*” In the Second Reading, St. Paul tells the Corinthians that, “*the world in its present form is passing away.*” And in the Gospel, Jesus' preaching begins with “*[now] is the time of fulfillment.*”

In other words, the end is near.

I would guess that most of us have a “spiritual bucket list.” Things we would do if only we had time - maybe once we retire - or maybe when the kids are grown up.

It might be to read the Bible from cover-to-cover. Or set aside 20 minutes in the morning for prayer and contemplation. Attend daily Mass - or become a daily communicant.

Yet, our relationship to God shouldn't be a failed New Year's resolution ... living our lives for Jesus should not be an after-thought.

Rather, if we would only permit it - the transforming grace of Jesus Christ should compel us to live with the realization that “*it is the time of fulfillment*” ... “*the world as we know it is passing away*” ... “*only a few more days*”.

God created us for Himself - to spend eternity with him. We are not made for this world - we are built for the next. We should all be living off of our bucket lists - because we all have a terminal condition - life ... which ends with death.

Let us listen closely for the voice of Jesus as he calls out to us in our daily lives ... during our daily work ... in our day-to-day existence - let us hear the voice of Jesus as He calls out to each of us: “*Come, follow me.*”