



34th Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Solemnity of Christ the King

The Holy Scriptures
are our letters
from home.

Lectio Divina

Lectio: This Sunday is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Solemnity of Christ the King. The gospel text for this Sunday follows directly on last Sunday's text. Our text is the last of three parables and the last of Jesus' teachings to his disciples. What he has been teaching will be lived out through the Last Supper and his Passion, death on the Cross and Resurrection which will happen soon, unfolding in front of the disciples. So this parable, the Parable of the Last Judgement, prepares his disciples to be the first leaders of his Church after Pentecost. The Jews, including the disciples, had an understanding of 'the Nations' as those beyond themselves, the Chosen People. There was a fear that 'the Nations' could overwhelm the Chosen People. There is that fear today that the Church may be overwhelmed by the world. Also, there was a concern about being found wanting in the final judgement. This was acute for a People who primarily saw '*doing God's will*' as '*fulfilling the Law*'. So, how would the Chosen People and the Nations be judged? That is: will there be different judgement for those who live by the Law and for those who do not know either the Law or God? Or, are 'the Nations' already condemned? Jesus' parable teaches that everyone will be judged by the same standards. The standard for everyone is: have you done the will of God i.e. loving God and your neighbour as yourself? How much you know of God or the religious Laws, does not matter.¹ Those with whom you live and interact are those you must love.

Read: **Matthew 25: 31 - 46**

Meditatio: Am I apprehensive about being judged in this life and by God in eternal life? What is my image of the final judgement of the world? How do I think the world will end? What signs do I expect will come before the end of the world; is COVID-19 one of those signs? Am I concerned for the future of the Church? What is my image of Jesus' '*throne of glory*'? How do I look upon Jesus as King? Do I appreciate that I am blessed by God the Father with a heritage in the kingdom of God? How do I express my love of God? How do I understand God's Laws and Commandments? Do I help others out of love or only when some rule or law requires it? Do I know my neighbours i.e. those who live next door or in my street? How have I helped my neighbours? Have Pandemic restrictions drawn me closer to my neighbours or made interactions even more difficult? Am I aware that I help Jesus in so far as I help others? Do I take at least some opportunities to help others? Is my heart cold or closed to loving others? Do I only help others at a distance, through global campaigns and the like? Do I make time to visit the sick or housebound? Will I visit them more when restrictions are lifted? Do I leave the visiting of prisoners completely to others? Do I know anyone who has been imprisoned? What do I think Heaven and eternal life will be like? What is my image of Hell and eternal punishment? Will I be judged as having done 'the will of God'? Is Jesus my King and Lord?

Oratio: Pray for the Church, may the Holy Spirit guide her through these challenging times. Pray for confidence in God's merciful judgement. Pray that we will help those in need in the world and those in our neighbourhood. Pray that we may grow in the ways of love – reflecting Jesus' option for the poor. Pray for a just distribution of the world's food and resources. Pray for the StVdeP Society conferences and all groups who reach out to the poor and needy. Pray that we will recognize Jesus' presence in the 'least' of our brothers and sisters. Pray hearts filled with the love of God. Pray that we will look to Jesus as our King and Lord. Pray for hope in heaven.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Support the work of our StVdeP Conference.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another¹ as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire² prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'³

Notes:

¹ The Parable talks about the separation of the sheep and the goats. This does not infer that sheep are good and goats are evil. In Jesus' times sheep and goats grazed together until it came time to go to market for sale, it was then that they were separated. Being separated at the time of our 'going to market' i.e. our judgement at the end of our lives is what Jesus' Parable is imaging.

² "There is no neutral place. The fire means the torment of those who condemned themselves by closing and freezing their hearts so that they became incapable of love. During their lives, they became indifferent to the misfortune of their rejected and hungry brothers and sisters: now the splendour of God who is love burns and pains them." From footnotes on Mt 25:31 of the Christian Community Bible, pastoral edn 1988.

³ The next verse Mt 26:1 is: "When Jesus had finished all he wanted to say, ...". This Parable concludes Jesus' teachings through his words. He will teach from this moment by what is done to him, his Passion and death. Advent begins next weekend.