



Christ the King Matthew 25:31-46

31 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. **32** All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. **33** He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. **34** 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. **35** 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; **36** naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.” **37** 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? **38** When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; **39** sick or in prison and go to see you?” **40** And the King will answer, “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.” **41** Next he will say to those on this left hand, “Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; **43** 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.” **44** 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?” **45** 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.” **46** And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.’

Other readings: Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17, Psalm 22 (23) 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28

On this final Sunday of the liturgical year, the Solemnity of Christ the King, we come to the end of our reading of the Gospel according to Matthew. The dramatic scene of the judgement comes at the end of the fifth and last major speech of Jesus in this gospel, a speech which is focused on the final coming of the kingdom.

In this passage, which is both an invitation and a warning, Jesus is presented as ‘the King’. He has dominion over all. He is the judge, but the needy of the world are his brothers and sisters. We are invited to loving service of our brothers and sisters, especially of those in greatest need. The dreadful fate of ‘eternal punishment’ is the inevitable consequence of a refusal to love. It is only this deliberate refusal to love that can exclude us from the kingdom.

Do you see this gospel text as an encouragement or as a warning?

What lessons have you learned from hearing the Gospel of Matthew this year?

We pray for our young people, that they may respond with generosity to God’s call in their lives.

We pray that the gospel will be the motivating force in our lives, year by year.