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Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith In Laity Corner



Monday, November 27, 2017

Readings: Ez. 34:11-12, 15-7; Mt. 25:31-46

34 Sunday Ordinary Times

Solemnity of Christ the King

Kingdom Judging

Our Catholic church ushers out the last Sunday in the Church liturgical year with the Solemnity of recognizing and proclaiming that Jesus Christ is our King of everything on our earth and in the heavens. We recall as Catholics that this is a special Sunday, in which there is reflection on what makes ‘Christ Our King’? *Do we believe in Him as the source of our life and all that we have? Do we recognize His Will in our lives above our own?* These are just a few questions. History tells us that Pope Pius XI established this feast and reflective day to the growing secularism that was dominating the world at that time... *Boy, what will he say today!!* Where for most of us the purchase of the latest Iphone is far more important than giving our tithes to our church. When for us now travel, cruises, new vehicle, new upscale condo purchases will put any money we give to charity as just a penny afterthought.

What does the Readings say to us? The first reading from the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, (a gloomy guy) who warns us of what to expect.

“I myself will search for my sheep and examine them.” (Ez. 34:11)

God will take personal interest in His creatures (us), there will be an examination for us.

“I will deliver them from every place where they were scattered on the day of dark clouds.” (Ez. 34:12)

The same great “**I Am**” of the time of Moses will deliver us from the dark places where we may find ourselves.

“I will bring them back to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of Israel.” (Ez. 34:13)

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What a consoling assurance for God to give, as so many of us are victims of injustices, prejudices, abuse, neglect, and poverty of mind and spirit... He has a promise out there for us.... to lead us back home... Often times I wonder, what gave enslaved people the hope, as the cruelty continued.... These words gave hope that this pain cannot last forever.

*In good pastures I will pasture them.... in rich pastures
they will be pastured on the mountains of Israel. (Ez. 34:14)*

There is the firm hope in the words of the prophet Ezekiel that, when He comes, those weak and humiliated will find a place to rest; that there will be peace, the struggle to feed, to provide on their own and to warn off danger will have ceased and they will be on God's mountain of salvation. Hence, Psalm 23 echoes these thoughts. *'In green pastures, He leads me to revive my drooping spirits.'* The Good Shepherd will finally deliver His sheep and lead them where there is safety and rest. The prophet continues to eloquently show how God is going to care for those who are wounded, weak, distraught, and crushed.

*“The lost I will search out,
the strays I will bring back,
the injured I will bind up,
and the sick I will heal.” (Ez. 34: 16)*

Yet, there is a dire warning for those whose lives reflected the lap of luxury, those who inflicted injury upon others, whose political and economic systems were the underlying cause of the suffering and injury of the 'sheep'.

“The sleek and the strong I will destroy.” (Ez. 34:16)

Jesus Who came to fulfill the Will of His Father, echoed the warning of Ezekiel, some 500 odd years after. God's judgement will come, then there will be a separation of all people.

*“He will sit upon his glorious throne,
and all the nations* will be assembled before him.” (Mt. 28:31-2)*

God will deliver His righteous judgement upon us all. There will be a separation of one group from the other- one will be the sheep, who followed His Will, accepted His mercy; and the other will be the 'goats' who made the choice to turn away or refused God's mercy.

“He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.” (Mt. 28:33)

Jesus clearly defines for us how we are to be judged, and by what yardstick, our judgement will come.

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me,
naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me.” (Mt. 28:34-5)*

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What we do with the time in our lives today, how we treat others, those known to us and those unknown; will determine God's judgement on us. Yes, we have to donate, care, reach out, soothe, turn the other cheek, speak out against injustices, march against prejudices, speak up against falsehood (fake news) and abuse.... The path will never be easy; but our salvation depends on us doing charity without the fanfare of fame or disclosure. Never envy the rich, their tasks are so much harder; be content and always act in humility with love; praying for God's mercy along the ways of life.... Hope to see us there among the sheep some day!!!!

It never fails to shock me to see how cruel we can be to others like us... Let us pray for those hundreds of Sufi Islamic people killed at their place of worship. There is not true faith, which supports the deliberate termination of life in such a callous manner. Only the coming of Christ will vindicate those who work for peace, as we await that day... let us pray.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday's readings written by

Brenda Chee Wah, *a parishioner of Christ Our Hope Catholic Church*

Lithonia, Georgia.

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