# LIVING THE GOSPEL

## The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ The King
## 22th November, 2026

**Theme: "When the Son of man comes in his glory,…[32] Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."**

## Gathering Prayer

**All:** Almighty ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Exploring the Word

### Gospel Reading: Matthew 25: 31-46

[31] Jesus says 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 the 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 at 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 this to one of the least of these my brothers of mine, you did it to me.'
[41] Next he will say to those on his 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 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, but the virtuous to eternal life."

## Gospel Focus

On the last Sunday of the Liturgical year, our gospel reading gives us an account of the end of time. Christ the Good Shepherd will separate the sheep from the goats. Both were important animals, and so this in itself is not a statement of value, but the king's words give us more insight into the criteria for judgment. Each of us from all nations under the sun-sheep and goats alike-will be judged on how we responded to Jesus' invitation to recognize him in his "least brothers." The righteous in this parable seem oblivious to Jesus' presence among them. Perhaps they did not come to have explicit faith in Jesus, but in caring for those in need, they have cared for Christ himself. In contrast, those who are this parable's "goats" seem to have knowledge of the king's identity: "When did we see you…and not ministered to your needs?" Those of us who know Jesus and his love for us bear a particular responsibility to care for the least among us.

## Gospel Reflection

Classic works of art and literature, like Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel and Al Dante's *Inferno*, reflect an enduring fascination with the final judgment. Juxtaposed in vivid contrast are angels and devils, fire and clouds, the anguish of the damned and the joy of the redeemed. There's something satisfying in the thought that at the end time those who have done good will be rewarded and those who have not will be punished. To have a king who keeps an account of each one's actions and who then decrees who is blessed and who is cursed has appeal. This image is most satisfying, of course, to those who consider themselves upright and who suffer because of this, while observing that evildoers often prosper.

The image of an all-powerful, punishing diving king stand in strong contrast, however, to the image of God as shepherd in the first reading and the responsorial psalm. These depict God as personally tending the sheep, going after the lost ones, gathering them in everyplace they have wandered, binding up the injured ones, healing the sick, and leading them to green places with plentiful food, restfulness and refreshment-a very different approach to addressing those who miss the mark than fiery banishment. Many times in Matthew's Gospel as well, Jesus speaks of himself as shepherd and teaches his disciples how to be like him. He has compassion on the crowds when they are like sheep without a shepherd (Matt 9:36). He sends disciples to seek out the "lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6) and urges them to leave ninety-nine sheep who are safe to seek out the one lost. (18:10-14)

In today's gospel. Matthew holds in tension his eschatological theme that there is an end time when one's life choices become final and irreversible, while at the same time reprising his theme of Jesus as compassionate shepherd. Jesus is both an all-powerful monarch who sits upon a glorious throne and a loving shepherd. What stands out most vividly in Matthew's parable is not other-worldly vision of eternal glory or unrelenting damnation but the face of the hungry, thirsty, immigrant, naked, sick, and incarcerated Jesus. The fourfold repetition of this list underscores that Jesus is present and unavoidable at every turn, in those crying out to be shepherded. As often as Jesus' followers respond to these sisters and brothers in the way the Divine Shepherd did, he yet lives.

The shepherd's power over the sheep, as described in the Gospel of John, comes from intimate union (10:14), knowing each one by name (10:3), and an unsurpassable love that impels the shepherd even to give up his life for the sheep (10:11). This is power that is fueled by love, a persuasive power, quite different from a monarch who rules from on high. Today's parable warns not of a king who wields frightening power over unsuspecting subjects who did not realize their actions or omissions could damn them for all time, but of the deadly consequences if one ultimately rejects the shepherd's gracious beneficence. Such persons seal their own fate, choosing to be separated for all time from that empowering love.

## Old/New Testament and CCC links

## First Reading — Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

11 The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view.
12As a shepherd keeps all his flock. In view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. 13I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness…

15 I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest-it is the Lord who speaks. 16 I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them. 17 "As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

## Responsorial Psalm — Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

***R***: ***The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want*.** (***R***)

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. (***R***)

Near restful waters he leads me; to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name (***R***)

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. (***R***)

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. (***R***)

## Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

20 Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. 21 Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. 22 Just as all men died in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; 23 but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. 24 After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. 25 For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and 26 the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death,…

28 And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

**331.** Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are *his* angels: "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him. . "(Mt 25:31) They belong to him because they were created *through* and *for* him: "for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him."(Col 1:16) They belong to him still more because he has made them messengers of his saving plan:

"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?"(Heb 1:14)

**544.** The kingdom belongs *to the poor and lowly*, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to "preach good news to the poor";(Lk 4:18; cf. 7:22) he declares them blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."(Mt 5:3) To them - the "little ones" the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned.(Cf. Mt 11:25) Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation.(Cf. Mt 21:18; Mk 2:23-26; Jn 4:6 1; 19:28; Lk 9:58) Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.(Cf. Mt 25:31-46)

**1033.** We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: "He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."(1 Jn 3:14-15) Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren.(Cf. Mt 25:31-46) To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell."

**1503.** Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people"(Lk 7:16; cf. Mt 4:24) and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins;(Cf. Mk 2:5-12) he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.(Cf. Mk 2:17) His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me."(Mt 25:36) His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

**2447.** The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.(Cf. Isa 58:6-7; Heb 13:3) Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.(Cf. Mt 25:31-46) Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God(Cf. Tob 4:5-11; Sir 17:22; Mt 6:2-4)

> He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none and he who has food must do likewise.(Lk 3:11) But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.(Lk 11:41) If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?(Jas 2:15-16; cf. 1 Jn 3:17)

## Sharing and Discussion

1. When you read this passage, what immediately stands out to you—or what makes you feel a little uncomfortable?

2. "Both the 'sheep' and the 'goats' are surprised by the King's verdict ('Lord, when did we see you...?'). Why do you think neither group recognized Jesus in the moment—and what does that reveal about what He truly values?"

3. Since the 'sheep' weren't serving just to earn a reward, how do we cultivate a habit of compassion that flows naturally out of who we are, rather than feeling like a spiritual checklist?

## Closing Prayer

**Facilitator:** Loving God, hear the prayers we offer today and rouse us out of selfish indifference. Give us eyes to see you in all we encounter and a heart like your own to respond with love and mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Facilitator:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen

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**Every Saturday**

**Time**: 9.30 – 11.00 am

**Venue**: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

**Mary Chua** - 96965049 (marybay2468@gmail.com)
**George Chee** – 97399216 (georgejc@gmail.com)

**Reflection material available on Parish Website** under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

**References for the Living the Gospel Reflection**:

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