

Last Sunday after Pentecost: Christ the King

November 22, 2020

Year A RCL

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Matthew 25:31-46

**“As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,
you did it to me.”**

By: The Rev. Fr. Fabian Villalobos

Today the majority of Christian denominations who adopted the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, celebrate during the last Sunday after Pentecost, the feast of Christ the King, occasionally referring to it as Christ the King Sunday or Reign of Christ.

The readings for this liturgical feast place us into the moment of the final judgment when the shepherd (according with the prophet Ezekiel in the first reading) or the King (according with the gospel of Matthew) will separate between one and another as a consequence of their obedience or disobedience.

The actions of mercy and compassion in daily life to the “least of these” are recognized as enough to guarantee entrance into the Kingdom. It is important to remember that today, on the last Sunday of the liturgical year 2020, in the Sermon on the mount found at the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, Jesus has offered a program of life that conduces to a reward in the day of judgement. This recognizes the efforts and tribulations of those called “blessed”, which endure and suffer for others.

They are blessed because they work and care for others imitating King Jesus. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers".

The judgment for them more than the separation from one another is the glorious moment of being welcomed into the palace of the king. They will hear: 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Those who care and love for others abundantly will have a place in God's eternal habitations. More than calculated actions to receive a recompense, the judgment is about living with generosity and kindness toward others.

When we treat others with love and clemency, we are doing nothing extraordinary. For us Christians, it is expected and part of our ethos as followers of King Jesus. 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'. The answer is and will be always the same, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

The members of the family of King Jesus are those rejected, despised, and excluded. Remember that the Kingship of Jesus is different from what we know about kings. He is a king who speaks to the lowly and the rejected. He is a king who serves rather than being served. He is a king who enters the holy city of Jerusalem, not gloriously on a horse, but seated on a donkey (John 12:14).

The rhetoric of power, prestige, supremacy that we find in some Christian circles or modern believers that embark in political or economic nationalism invoking the gospel of Jesus has nothing to do with Him. While we consider kings and queens to be wealthy, powerful and prestigious people; King Jesus on the contrary appears poor, he is born without a home or a palace, the gospel is clear that Jesus was placed in a manger because there was not room for him in the inn. King Jesus appears weak to the point of being easily detained and executed by crucifixion among criminals. King Jesus' prestigious friends are those disenfranchised, excluded from society, those call sinners.

He is a king unlike any other king, and his kingdom is unlike any other kingdom, for it is not of this world. Nonetheless, King Jesus is the only King that has the capacity and authority to judge the whole humanity and send people to eternal punishment or welcome them into eternal life.

Since Christianity is the way of the cross, the obedience to the gospel and the submission to King Jesus is not optional or subjective to our own desires. If we want to hear, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father" living the values of love, forgiveness, compassion toward others is our only way to access eternal life with King Jesus.

“The least of these” continuing being among us, please do not ignore them!

King Jesus gives everything to us, he goes to the extreme to give His own life.

As we accept His Kingship ruling over us, it is necessary to stop making “the least of these” invisible. We must truly work to improve their lives. If we ignore this call, we will end up on the left side like those who choose to do only for themselves over doing for others, and we will lose the entrance to the Kingdom of Jesus. Amen.