

**Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**  
**November 26, 2023**  
**The Final Sunday of the Church Year**

In today's gospel, we hear a very powerful and an immensely important message that Christ is imparting to his disciples and to each of us. Jesus is talking about the end times. We heard Father Saucier say a few days ago, "We've been living in the 'end times' since Christ's resurrection." With that in mind, we should be living every day as if Christ were returning with the nightfall.

In this gospel, Jesus is telling us how God will judge each of us on that last day when we must appear before Him and learn of our fate in the eternal hereafter. Christ explains how we will be judged by our very specific behavior. William Barclay, the well-known theologian, noted God's judgement would reflect our reaction to human need. This gospel addresses that very issue. Barclay pointed out our accumulated knowledge, wealth, fame, and/or power would play no part in our final judgement. No, none of that! Christ's words specifically spell it out for us; we must be involved in charitable, loving behavior. We must recognize the needs of our brethren and respond in a loving manner.

I suspect all of you have heard of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. I don't doubt you probably recall what the gospels and our church teach us about charity. True charity is simply love and love is the greatest of the virtues. I believe we are all aware, as Christ pointed out, the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind. Secondly, we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus points out the very simple things we are required to do; feed the hungry, provide drink for the thirsty, clothe those in need of clothing, welcome strangers, visit those imprisoned and care for the sick. These are simple things most of us can do.

Recently, I read an article written by Pat Arensberg in the Catholic Week. Pat's article noted how people can have a blind spot which might keep them from seeing brethren in need. Not seeing those in need or ignoring the needs of others puts us in the situation of treating them as we might unknowingly treat Christ. Today's gospel spells it out, doesn't it? Mr. Arensberg suggested we learn where to look. He pointed out, and I have to agree, we can contact Catholic Charities. We can ask our priest. We can volunteer to assist with CCD, RCIA or participate in other programs within our own church. There are so many options to choose from if we want to see where the needs exist. The Knights of Columbus are involved in helping the community. The Ladies' Auxiliary provides service to our church community. St. Vincent de Paul provides much needed food and other assistance to people in significant need. There are so many organizations and ways to help others. Pat Arensberg ended his article by saying, "...I remind myself that we benefit as much, if not in fact more, than those whom we serve."

If I might add a caveat, I would remind you this love and charity must come from a loving heart not seeking merit for self. We must come to the realization that every person exists because of our God, and as He loves each of us, we must in turn love all He created as we love ourselves. We must realize every act of charity/love, when performed with true love of others, reflects the love we have for Him. Bishop Barron said it so eloquently; "We do not take our money, our social status, or our worldly power into the next world, but we do take the quality of our love."

In the same line of thought, Saint Mother Teresa advised us to never let anything come between you and Jesus. In other words, let nothing come between you and God's love. She was always on target, wasn't she? Peace be with you, my friends.