

26 November 2017 (34th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17; Psalm 22(23):1-3a,5-6; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28; Matthew 25:31-46.

**In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me!**

We conclude our Church liturgical year with the feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Given that in our political environment we have almost lost the meaning of royalty, I would suggest that we celebrate Christ as Lord and Master of the Universe. Along our liturgical year we have been reading the gospel according to Matthew and we have been invited to walk with Jesus as his faithful disciples, carefully listening to and absorbing his words and teaching. The role of the disciple is to learn from and imitate the master. At the end of another year, we are once again invited to proclaim that Jesus Christ is our one and true Lord and Master; he is indeed the Lord of our universe!

A year ago, as we started reading the gospel according to Matthew, we learnt that in a dream, the angel of the Lord had told Joseph that the child his wife was carrying was Emmanuel, God with us. In today's gospel reading, towards the end of Matthew's gospel, we get an inkling of what this name really means.

In the gospel reading today Matthew presents Jesus, the Son of Man, sitting in judgement over all the people of the world. This is a court case where one's crimes are read out and punishment meted out, but the reading out of the sentence. As we have seen in the case of the foolish maidens (two weeks ago) and the servant with the one talent (last week), it is not the master who passes judgement, but rather the person who judges himself. What is seen as a punishment is, in fact, the consequence of what one has chosen to do during his whole life.

The Son of Man calls blessed those who have found time to reach out to the poor and the needy, unknowingly their actions were done to Jesus himself. Jesus has told us about the two great commandments: love of God and love of neighbour. This gospel fully explains the link between the two commandments: I love God when I love my neighbour! Similarly, the extra oil that the wise maidens carried with them in their flasks was the oil of reaching out to the poor. Similarly, the money earned by the servants in last week's parable, is the result of their work with the poor. In the two parables and in today's 'judgement scene,' those who are blessed are invited into the joys of the kingdom; the kingdom they participated in through their love of neighbour, they now enter in its fullness.

Jesus is the Emmanuel, God with us. Even after his resurrection and ascension, he is still Emmanuel and we are constantly reminded of the need to 'stay awake' and look out for the Lord that is coming. God has hidden himself in a place where he can be very easily found: in the poor and the needy, the sick and the elderly, refugees and prisoners. Pope Francis constantly reminds us that the best way to meet Jesus is in the poor.

As we end our Church liturgical year perhaps we can ask ourselves a question: how often have I found Jesus this year? Have I truly made Jesus my Lord and Master by giving him my time and energy? What are the good works that I can list that witness to my commitment to Christ as Lord and Master? In our parish we have various ministries that help us reach out to those in need: St Vincent de Paul, Heidelberg, the Austin Hospital, visiting the sick and elderly in their homes, and other activities. Let us continue to reach out to Christ in our midst.

Fr Mario