

My dear brothers and sisters, today, the Holy Mother the Church celebrates the **Solemnity of Christ the King**. In the Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ has been given a variety of names; each name reveals new details about Jesus Christ. Yet no title and no number of titles will ever suffice to adequately express all that Christ is, his beauty, his wisdom, his power and his love. The Early Christians avoided calling Jesus “king”, less the title be misunderstood by earthly powers; they chose to call him ‘the Lord’, but the meaning they attached to both titles was the same, that is **there is no power above the power of Jesus**; everyone and everything falls under his dominion. Again, the Early Church professed in the Creed – **“we believe that his kingdom will have no end”** Christ is the King who shares his life with us, Christ is the King who shares his body and blood in the Eucharist with us, Christ is the King who shares his priesthood with us.

The first reading describes the Messiah as a king – shepherd. The people of Israel are considered to be Yahweh's flock; Yahweh was Israel's shepherd. Priests and kings had failed the people and the prophet announced that Yahweh would personally take care of them, by seeding an extraordinary shepherd, a descendant of David, **to rescue, to guide, to feed and to defend Israel** (Ezk. 34:23). As for you, my sheep, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats (Ezk. 34:17).

The judgment scene, in Matthew 25, is unique to his gospel and forms the climactic conclusion to his Eschatological Discourse. Only here, in all of the gospels, does Jesus ascribe to himself the status of a king rendering judgment. The criteria of that judgment are most striking; **they are the simple acts of love and kindness directed to the “little ones”** of this world. To have done these everyday works of goodness is to have touched Jesus himself; to have neglected to do them is to have neglected to the needs of Christ, an omission worthy of condemnation.

All the various things listed in Matthew 25:35-46 **become works of Christian charity** when the person doing them sees Christ in these “least” of my brethren. We must learn to recognize Christ when he comes out to meet us in our neighbors. No human life is ever isolated. It is bound up with other lives. According to St. John of the Cross, **we will be judged on the degree and quality of our love**. Our Lord will ask us to account not only for the evil we have done, but also for the good we have omitted. We can see that the sins of omission are very serious matter and that the basis of love of neighbor is Christ's presence in the least of our brothers and sisters.

St. Teresa of Avila writes: “here the Lord asks only two things of us: **love for his Majesty and love for our neighbor**. It is for these two virtues that we must strive, and if we attain them perfectly we are doing his will.... This parable clearly shows that Christianity cannot be reduced to a kind of agency for “doing good”. Service of our neighbor acquires supernatural value when it is done out of love for Christ, when **we see Christ in the person in need**. This is why St. Paul asserted that “if I give away all I have ... but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor.13:3).

In describing Christian charity, which gives meaning to “social aid”, the Second Vatican Council opines: “wishing to come down to topics that are practical and of some urgency, the Council lays stress on respect for the human person: **everyone should look upon his neighbor as another self**, bearing in mind, above all, his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way ‘less he follow the example of the rich man who ignored Lazarus, the poor man(cf. Lk.16:18-31).

Finally, dear friends, let us know that the last judgment does not mark an end, but **a new beginning for those who have followed Jesus' leadership and heeded his great command of love**. Let us do our best to love one another and to prepare ourselves worthy of the Kingdom of God. Let us remind ourselves that the kingdom of God cannot exist alongside the reign of sin. Therefore, let us pray unceasingly for right disposition, so that Christ our King will say to us ‘**come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world**’. Amen!