



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Christ the King Sunday, November 22, 2020

Encountering The King

by Garland F. Pierce

Matthew 25:31-46

25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,

25:33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

25:34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

25:35 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,

25:36 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.'

25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?

25:38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?

25:39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

25:40 And the king will answer them, '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.'

25:41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

25:42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

25:43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

25:44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'

25:45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

This Sunday is known to many as Christ the King Sunday. It marks the end of the liturgical year. It is the last Sunday before Advent. Christ the King Sunday or the Reign of Christ is a relatively late addition to the Western liturgical calendar, appearing in 1925. It was introduced in the church just after World War I, at a time when the world was still trying to recover from having been violently divided. Nationalism, consumerism, and other such forces seemed to rule the day, not to mention new forms of injustice. Christ the King Sunday was to remind the church and the world that Jesus is the King of kings whose rule is different from the kingdoms of this world. His is one that is of peace and justice. His is one that has been prepared for whosoever, for everyone who sincerely wants to be a part of it.

In Matthew 25, we are warned through the parables of the bridesmaids and of the talents to stay focused and ready and to be prepared to take some risks for the reign and realm of God may appear at any moment. We come to this portion of the scripture when the King appears and begins to judge. Those sheep who have been found pleasing in the King's sight are invited into the kingdom prepared for them. Those goats who have been found wanting in the King's sight are condemned. For some, judgment is a topic that they would rather avoid. The kingdom principle is a belief that produces a way of living and being in the world, always focused and ready to do what Christ would have us do and willing to take some risks on the least and the last. Still for some, such a focus on the doing misses the mark and doesn't stress faith enough; however, it is interesting to note that neither the sheep nor the goats seem to know when they have encountered the Christ. Both groups ask, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison?"

Who is this King? Where is this King? If we cannot always know who he is and where he is, how shall we govern ourselves accordingly? These are all important questions given that the text indicates that our actions are so critical. They will be judged. Maybe we are called to a Kingdom state of mind, one that calls us to live in peace with *everyone*, work for justice for *everyone*, risk with compassion for even the stranger, identify even with the prisoner, dine and fellowship with the hungry and thirsty, and treat *everyone* like they just might be this King of kings.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Looking back, when might you have encountered Jesus and you were not aware? Would you do anything differently?

PRAY:

Gracious God, God of the poor,
your Son Jesus was born among us
poor, humble and dependent.
Open our eyes and our hearts and our hands
to honor him now as our Lord and King
by welcoming him in those who are hungry and thirsty,
in all who are abandoned and lonely,
in refugees, in the poor and the sick.
Let our love become free and spontaneous,
like the tenderness you have shown us in your Son.
Welcome us in the everlasting Kingdom
prepared for us through Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

—adapted from [Liturgies Alive, Models of Celebration](#).

ACT:

1. Based on your reflections from the TALK section, how are you being called right now to respond in compassion to “the least of these”? Make a plan as to how you will respond with your next most faithful step (big or small). Help others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, and wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

3. Revisit the Psalm 23 Challenge first issued as part of the March 22, 2020 set of resources.

Song:

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart
AMEC Hymnal, #8

1. Re-joyce, ye pure in heart,
Re-joyce, give thanks and sing;
Your glo-rious ban-ner wave on high,
The cross of Christ your King.

*Refrain: Re-joyce, Re-joyce, Re-joyce, give thanks and sing.
Re-joyce, Re-joyce,*

2. Bright youth and snow-crowned age,
Strong men and maid-ens meek;
Raise high your free, ex-ult-ing song
God’s won-drous prais-es speak.

Refrain

3. With all the an-gel choirs,
With all the saints on earth,

Pour out the strains of joy and bliss,
True rap-ture, no-blest mirth.

Refrain

4. Yes, on through life's long path,
Still chant-ing as ye go;
From youth to age, by night and day,
In gladness and in woe.

Refrain

5. At last the march shall end,
The wea-ried ones shall rest,
The pil-grims find their Fa-ther's house,
Je-ru-sa-lem the blest.

Refrain

6. Then on, ye pure in heart,
Re-joice, give thanks, and sing;
Your glo-rious ban-ner wave on high,
The cross of Christ your King.

Refrain

Alternative Song: Soon and Very Soon, We Are Going to See the King by Andrae Crouch:
<https://youtu.be/VxarZBxK0iQ>

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.