

Christ the King  
November 26, 2017  
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## Reflection

The final week of ordinary time begins with the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe: the Feast of Christ the King. The title of "king" might surprise us. The word reminds us of a form of government from which we're progressing. And this progress is wrapped in cynicism, mired with distrust, weighed by profound disagreement. If democracy is an improvement that dissatisfies, how crummy would it be to have a king?

But Jesus is the messianic king: the Son of Man who came from heaven, and the Suffering Servant who gave himself for us. He is the anointed Son of God, and we call him Lord. "All things are under his feet," so he has power over nature and illness, demons and death; he has the authority to forgive sin. Jesus is Lord over the world and history: "The Church believes that the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master (GS 10)." He is the beginning and the end.

Jesus is priest, prophet and king and we participate in these offices. Like Jesus, we exercise our kingship by serving the poor and suffering...beginning with ourselves. According to St. Leo the Great, "What, indeed, is as royal for a soul as to govern the body in obedience to God." With a body become a loyal subject, with passions ruled by a virtuous will, a Christian is made a king.

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17  
Ps 23  
1 Cor 15:20-26, 28  
Mt 25:31-46

Beginning with ourselves? Maybe ending with ourselves. Jesus reminds us that we will be judged: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory...he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left." The judgement will be based on how we treat the other. Our actions count. What we do in this world determines our destination in the next. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." We're called to give alms, to share our fortune with the poor, and today there's an additional envelope for the St. Vincent de Paul society. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." The word "welcomed" is a translation of *συνηγάγετέ* (*synygoete*); which sounds like synagogue - the Jewish word for temple. We're called to welcome others to our church, even when they take our seats on Christmas Eve. "I was naked and you clothed me." We put old clothes in the drop box, but do we strive for modesty and purity? "I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Christ heals body and soul, freeing us from ailments with love, and breaking the chains of addiction with mercy.

In the first reading, Ezekiel tells us the word of God: "I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out...I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak."

The good we do is comes from God. Jesus within us does his work and we cooperate as his body. We do not do it alone, but are strengthened by his sacraments. "He leads me beside still waters," so our virtues are born in baptism. "You anoint my head with oil," so they're strengthened by confirmation. "You prepare a table before me," so our virtues are nourished by the Eucharist. Jesus within us does the work, and he lets us serve Jesus within others. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me."

The Advent season will soon begin, and it's a time of preparation and waiting, yearning and praying. Daily Advent devotions can help us get ready for Christmas by meditating on the word of God. Each bulletin contains a **book** of Advent devotions by Henri Nouwen to help us prepare. And it's Mary who helps brings us to Jesus, so that we can do his will and accept him as king. Words known by the Legion of Mary are *Ad Jesum Per Mariam*: To Jesus Through Mary. The Legion is helping us to provide **copies** of "Thirty-Three Days to Morning Glory." It guides our consecration to Mary. We will start on Wednesday, and finish up on January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. May we be transformed through her intercession to serve others as Jesus serves us.