

22. November 2020

“Feast of Christ the King”

Mt 25:31-46

'When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.'

Today, on the Feast of Christ the King, the Church thinks of the Lord who will return at the end of time and judge all nations. Our life lies before him, nothing is and remains hidden before him. It is a word that can make us very awake and calls us to responsibility.

True discipleship of Christ leads to concrete action. Sacred Scripture never tires of pointing out again and again that the consequence of faith leads to practised charity. This love is tested - as the text today makes clear - by whether we have done the works of mercy. This Word is very much in the focus of the proclamation,

so that the Lord makes even the Last Judgement dependent on it! Therefore, no one who wants to follow God's way can escape this responsibility of love without running the risk of being rejected by the Lord.

The absolute necessity of the requirement of practical charity is revealed when we look at God and his work itself.

The reason for our existence is love, the free choice to bring God's reasonable creatures into being and to give them a share in his glory.

It is worthwhile to let this basic statement about the reason for our existence penetrate deep into our heart. God is the great You, who loves us and prepares everything for our existence, both natural and spiritual things.

Under normal circumstances, this reality is reflected in the family. Parents prepare everything for their child and create the best conditions. It goes without saying that this child deserves our loving attention. We would be deeply concerned if parents did not live up to this self-evident love. Other relatives are also included in this care for the child. This is so deeply rooted in our social reality that in drastic cases it can even lead to parents being denied the right to educate their children and, in the worst case, even punished!

If we take this example, it is easier to understand how God as the Father of all human beings is concerned about his children. But since we all belong to his family, he shares with us the responsibility for the people. Just as he is concerned about us, we should care for each other in true brotherly love. Since God has called us into the universal family beyond our immediate kinship, the help we give is not limited to the family. The love we receive from God our Father calls us to share this love with others in general.

But it goes even one step further.

Through the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus connects with humanity. That is why he said: *"In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."*

According to Jesus' words, every service to our neighbour is a service to God and we can meet God in the one who needs help, who asks for our love. This was, for example, the spirituality of Mother Teresa from Calcutta. She and her sisters have sought the poor to serve Jesus in them.

So let us remain vigilant where we can serve the people in need and understand more and more that in doing so we are fulfilling the will of God, indeed, we are coming close to him and serving him.