THE Wednesday WORD

Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 22nd November 2026

Christ The King — Matthew 25:31-46

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.

Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE LAST JUDGEMENT

Jesus said to his disciples: '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 the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men 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 for 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; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous 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; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Next 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, naked 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 naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, 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 virtuous to eternal life.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...

This is the last of Matthew's great parables. The world is finally divided into 'goodies' and 'baddies'. The great dramatic scene here depicted is that of the Final Judgement of all, but we shall each of us at the moment of death face the judgement of our divine Lord in his glory. This confrontation will be an experience far more awesome and shattering than any description can express, and yet fulfilling and re-assuring. We will know at last in a naked way our own sin and also our own infinite value before the transcendent figure of the Lord. Two striking points are stressed in the parable. Firstly, we will be judged uniquely on our treatment of those in any kind of need. Not first of all on our prayer-life; not on our asceticism; not on penances undertaken; but on our respect for others - how far we look to see what they need and what we can give. The ten commandments of the Old Testament, the eight beatitudes of the New can be summarised in this way: speak the truth, be honest (including financially), honour father and mother (or children), hunger for justice, make peace. The second striking point is the reason for the first: that Christ is in each person. What we do to others, we do to Christ.

What does it mean that Jesus is in all other people, especially the stranger, the sick, the comfortless, even those in prison? How does this teaching of Jesus change my attitude to people I despise or avoid or just ignore?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.

Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.

You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.

Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **KINDNESS**

(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)

As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday Word Plus +

If you'd like to spend more prayerful time with God through the First and Second Readings, follow the same process for praying with the Gospel (overleaf). Gently place the First or Second Reading and Fr Henry's reflection into that same prayerful rhythm for more fruitful meditation with God's Word.



First Reading: *The Loving Shepherd*

Ezekiel 34:11-12.15-17

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest - it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them. As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

Is this really an appropriate reading for the Feast of Christ the King? All about sheep? Shouldn't it be about crowns, medals, processions and majesty? No, it should not! Christ's kingship is modelled on God's kingship or, rather, Jesus came to show us what God's kingship is. 'The kingship of God has come upon you', was his first proclamation. In the British countryside we can usually leave the sheep to graze on their own. In the hilly country of Palestine there is always a shepherd to look after them, to stop them wandering over a cliff or stave off attack from wild animals. Sheep are silly creatures; they can be guaranteed to wander, wide-eyed and gormless, in front of a passing car and then run the wrong way. We are silly creatures too, and do just the same. We need God's care to keep us on the right path. Jesus as the Good Shepherd cherishes us, guards us, heals us, calms our fears, and even gives his life for us. That is what his kingship is.

What does it mean to you to proclaim the kingship of Christ? How may we model our lives on that kingship?

Second Reading: *King Jesus Presents the Kingdom*

1 Corinthians 15:20-26.28

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet, and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

What will happen at the end of the world? How will the world be brought to an end? We simply do not know, and it is not the sort of thing the Bible needs to teach us. For us Christians three things are certain - and this is what Paul teaches us here in vivid picture-language. Firstly, God's sovereignty will extend over the whole of creation in peace and harmony. Secondly, this will be through Christ's work of mediation, for Christ is Lord of the Church, which is his Body. When Paul says 'he has put all his enemies under his feet', he is quoting a messianic Psalm about the priest-king of Jerusalem, frequently applied to Jesus, the new priest-king of creation. Thirdly, Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection: where he has led the way, we are to follow.

How would you explain the resurrection of the dead? What words and images would you use?

"Where he has led the way, we are to follow."

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