



Sunday Mass Preparation Guide

Including

The Readings

**First Reading
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Study Guide

**Study Guide including Background on Readings
And Thought Questions**

In-Depth Reflection

**A Thought-Provoking Written Analysis on
One of the Readings**

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UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

USCCB » Bible » Daily Readings

NOVEMBER 26, 2017

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Lectionary: 160

Reading 1

[EZ 34:11-12, 15-17](#)

Thus says the Lord GOD:
I myself will look after and tend my sheep.
As a shepherd tends his flock
when he finds himself among his scattered sheep,
so will I tend my sheep.
I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered
when it was cloudy and dark.
I myself will pasture my sheep;
I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD.
The lost I will seek out,
the strayed I will bring back,
the injured I will bind up,
the sick I will heal,
but the sleek and the strong I will destroy,
shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord GOD,
I will judge between one sheep and another,
between rams and goats.

Responsorial Psalm

[PS 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6](#)

R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose.
R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R. *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

Reading 2

1 COR 15:20-26, 28

Brothers and sisters:
Christ has been raised from the dead,
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
For since death came through man,
the resurrection of the dead came also through man.
For just as in Adam all die,
so too in Christ shall all be brought to life,
but each one in proper order:
Christ the firstfruits;
then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ;
then comes the end,
when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father,
when he has destroyed every sovereignty
and every authority and power.
For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
When everything is subjected to him,
then the Son himself will also be subjected
to the one who subjected everything to him,
so that God may be all in all.

Alleluia

MK 11:9, 10

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

MT 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples:
"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,
and all the angels with him,
he will sit upon his glorious throne,

and all the nations will be assembled before him.
And he will separate them one from another,
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
Then the king will say to those on his right,
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me,
naked and you clothed me,
ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me.'
Then the righteous will answer him and say,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,
or thirsty and give you drink?
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,
or naked and clothe you?
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'
And the king will say to them in reply,
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did
for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.'
Then he will say to those on his left,
'Depart from me, you accursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
For I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,
a stranger and you gave me no welcome,
naked and you gave me no clothing,
ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'
Then they will answer and say,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty
or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,
and not minister to your needs?'
He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you,
what you did not do for one of these least ones,
you did not do for me.'
And these will go off to eternal punishment,
but the righteous to eternal life."

Get the daily readings sent to your email every morning

Email Address:* *indicates required

About me

THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

November 26, 2017 A

Opening prayer: *Jesus, our good Shepherd and King, rescue us from the power of sin and heal our wounds. Instruct us in your ways and guide us as we journey in faith and love. Let your coming at the end of time be an occasion of rejoicing for each of us as we strive to live out your Great Commandment of Love. Amen.*

Sharing life: Name three things that you are very grateful for this Thanksgiving.

Facilitator reads focus statement: On this last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, the Church celebrates the Kingship of Christ. This year (Cycle A), Christ is presented as a King unlike any other. In the first reading, God is the Shepherd and Provider of his people. In the Gospel, Christ is presented as the Judge who will evaluate all human conduct in the context of compassion for others. In the second reading, Paul states that one day all things will be brought to completion in Christ. At the end of time, Christ will triumph over all evil, the last evil being death itself.

If you have not read the commentary prior to the meeting, consider doing so either before or after each reading.

FIRST READING: Ezechiel 34:11-12, 15-17

The leaders of Israel (34:1-10) are reproached for living off the sheep without responding to their needs. They provide no care for those who remain close, and leave those who stray to their own resources. With their people in great danger, the religious leaders provide for themselves even when many people are lost. There is no noticeable difference in their leaders' care for their flock. Now God himself will assume the role of shepherd. He will bring back the exiled and go after the lost, the wounded, and the sick.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 23

This psalm uses the imagery of the Good Shepherd to describe God's care for his people.

SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

Paul says that when the carpet is rolled up on time itself, this is how it is going to go. First, the faithful—dead and living—will be lifted up. Then, every power on earth will be smashed to bits, and all will be subdued under Christ, including death. Finally, Christ will surrender to God, and God is all in all.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

Commenting on this Gospel, Patricia Sanchez writes:

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), the great Russian author, is also a Christian who took seriously the demands of

the Great Sermon (Matthew 5-7) and attempted to live his life accordingly. One day, a beggar stopped him while he was out walking and asked him for alms. Tolstoy searched his pockets for a coin but, finding none, he said with regret, "Please don't be angry with me, my brother, but I have nothing with me. If I did, I would gladly give it to you." At that, the beggar's face brightened with joy. "You have given me more than I asked for," he said, "you have called me brother!" Tolstoy had not only grasped the intent of the Great Sermon but he had also penetrated the truth of today's Gospel. He regarded the poor man asking him for alms as a brother because he had understood and made his own the great commandment (Matthew 22:37). But he had also learned to see the face of Christ in the poor and, because of that insight, he met the criteria of judgment set forth for our consideration in this Matthean text.

So many of the important themes of Matthew's Gospel come to a climactic crescendo in this eschatological (end times) scene. Up to this point, readers of Matthew have been told that wheat and weeds will grow together until harvest, that all species of fish will be hauled together in one net, that good and bad will grow together until the final separation. Believers have also been instructed, through many parables, with lessons of watchfulness and waiting. With this passage, it becomes evident that the time of growing together and waiting has passed, yielding to the moment of separation and judgment. In this Gospel, Jesus is revealed as the King who will judge us on the criteria of compassion for the least of our brothers and sisters. The blessed

are those who have ministered to the needs of the poor. In doing so, they have ministered to Christ himself.

(Used with permission *The Word We Celebrate: Commentary on the Sunday Lectionary Years A, B, C*, by Patricia Sanchez, - Sheed & Ward publisher (9-1-89.)

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse, idea or image in the readings spoke to you most? Why?
2. Images of God as judge and shepherd are brought together in the first and third readings. How can we hold both images together?
3. How do you seek to live the call to compassion presented in today's Gospel?
4. How does the beggar looking for a 'handout' challenge your call to be compassionate to the least of our brothers and sisters?

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on this Sunday's readings. Suggestion: Express your concern for the poor in some concrete way.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Especially pray for all those who daily seek to improve the lot of the poor. ©

Save the Date!!

Saturday, March 10, 2018

Annual Day of Reflection

by the Space Coast Alliance of
Small Christian Communities with
Father Dave Pivonka, TOR,
The Wild Goose Is Loose!

A Challenging Gospel about the Hidden Christ and Our Call to be a Community of Mercy.

Reflection for the Solemnity of Christ the King, Cycle A

Last Sunday we listened to the hard-hitting *Parable of the Talents* gospel which clearly tells us that when our time on earth is over, God will exact from us an account of our stewardship here on earth.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King which celebrates Christ's victory and God's sovereignty over all things. On our powerful and challenging gospel, I share with you reflections from several authors. In his *Seasons of the Word*, Fr. McBride writes the following:

In these verses Matthew gives us an apocalyptic vision of the last judgment, when all the nations-without distinction between Jew and Gentile, without discrimination between priest and people - are assembled before the king. It would be a pity to limit the value of the passage to a last judgment scene, because what it offers is a picture of the kind of community where Jesus sees himself to be recognized, the kind of community where Jesus sees himself to be a home.

The presence of Jesus is hidden among the poor and the vulnerable: where their needs are recognized, Jesus is acknowledged. When the hungry are fed, when those who thirst are offered drink, when strangers are offered hospitality, when the naked are covered in dignity, when the sick are seen to, when prisoners are visited, Jesus himself is touched by mercy. Their vulnerability is his vulnerability; he is present where human need is greatest.

According to this vision, if an alien came from outer space and asked us where our Jesus lived, we might have to take him to strange sanctuaries: refugee camps, back alleys, hospitals, prisons, and tell him that Jesus is to be found somewhere in these places. And tell him too, that the blessed of God are to be found there, feeding, welcoming, clothing, visiting, paying attention.

Human graciousness

In Matthew's vision we have a list of human needs and appropriate responses by a caring community. None of the needs is specifically religious: they are human needs as wide as the human heart. To those ordinary human needs there is the response of the kingdom. That response is an authentically human one, and, therefore, a profoundly religious one; it is honoured by the title "blessed of my Father".

The blessed are praised for the simplest actions-and they are all actions not attitudes-to those who experience simple human needs. There are no records of great heroism, no stories of conquest, no great trials or sufferings, no marvellous triumphs over disaster, no feats of imaginative daring. The requirements are simple and don't go beyond the capacity of any human being. There is no training required, no academic qualifications necessary. The actions are the simple response of those who pay attention to what happens in the world of the familiar and who move to answer the needs which confront them.

For Jesus, what happens in the world of the familiar has an eternity of importance about it's little acts of kindness have eternal significance; human graciousness and charity are ground enough for welcome into the fullness of the kingdom.

A community of mercy

Those who are blessed are not conscious of having done any special service to Jesus: "When did we see you...?" They have responded with mercy to those in need, without any great thought beyond that response. In the mission discourse in chapter 10 Jesus declared that any kind of service done to his apostles would be rewarded as done to him, and indeed to God: "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me...Whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you he shall not lose his reward." In today's Gospel that thought is extended to embrace "one of the least of these brothers of mine."

*Jesus looks upon every kindness done to a person in need, however lowly, as a kindness done to himself. **Those who***

are cursed bring the doom upon themselves because they failed to respond to simple human needs. They are not accused of violent crimes, or offences on a grand scale - any more that the blessed were praised for heroic virtue; rather, they are accused because they failed to act on the human need they saw before them.

The shared problem of the blessed and the cursed is" "When did we see you?" That may be our question too, for all we see is the legion of those in need. But the Gospel asks us to interpret what we see. The Gospel challenges us to see the broken body of Christ in the brokenness and the woundedness of those we see around us. Christ still suffers in the hungry, the thirsty, the strange, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned. To pay attention to them is to pay attention to the broken body of Christ. And to do that is to be welcomed as blessed of God, because it is to live as a community of mercy.

Lord, if we only knew it was you.

The following reflection is from Fr. Flor McCarthy.

The fact that in Jesus God became human, and lived among us, meant he ran the risk of not being recognized for what he really was. We have no problem recognizing Christ in church. But when we meet him out on the streets, where he is sometimes sunk in poverty and sorrow, we are reluctant even to bid him the time of day.

Nelson Mandela was still a young man when he became leader of the banned African National Congress. At a certain stage in the struggle he was forced to go underground. During that time he used many different disguises. In general he remained as unkempt as possible. He knew that by being so disguised he ran the risk of not being recognized even by his own. And this often happened.

Once he was to attend a meeting in a distant part of Johannesburg. A priest had arranged with friends of his to put him up for the night. However, when Mandela arrived at the house, the elderly lady who answered the doorbell took one look at him and exclaimed, 'We don't want your kind here!' And she shut the door in his face. Later when she found out who it was that she had turned away she was horrified and said to him, 'If only I knew it was you, I'd have given you the best room in the house.' Mandela didn't allow incidents like this to deter him.

Yet, in spite of his many disguises, there were friends who still managed to recognize him. For instance, one day he was posing as a chauffeur in Johannesburg. Wearing a long dust-coat and cap, he was waiting on a corner to be picked up when he saw an African policeman striding deliberately towards him. He looked around to see if he had a place to run, but then the policeman smiled at him, surreptitiously gave him the thumbs-up ANC salute, and was gone. Incidents like this happened many times, and Mandela was reassured to know that he had the loyalty of many Africans.

We could say that Jesus too goes about in many different disguises. How then are his friends to recognize him? It is comparatively easy. He always poses as a person in need-in need either of food, or drink, or lodgings, or welcome, or a visit...

'If only I had known it was you,' said the woman to Mandela. We hear the same words in today's Gospel: 'Lord, if only we had known it was you, we'd never have treated you like that. But we thought it was only some common person who was not worthy of our help.' But Jesus said that his disciples would be judged precisely by their response to such people-the poor, the lowly, the unimportant.

It's easy to be kind to the important-there is or will be a return in some shape or form. But it's quite another matter to be kind to those from whom we can expect nothing in return, perhaps not even thanks.

The uncaring are full of excuses. The genuinely caring on the other hand are almost apologetic about their goodness. 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you ...' They are embarrassed if you praise them. They don't want any big deal made of it. Charity is never so lovely as when one has lost consciousness that one is practicing charity.

In the judgment scene, people are condemned, not for sins of commission but for sins of omission. We may think we are good simply because we don't do any harm to anyone. But what about the good we fail to do? The sin of omission is one of the worst sins in the world.

From a Christian point of view, there is only one real failure in life-failure to love. We have to concentrate on doing good, rather than on merely avoiding evil. Let us not wait for big opportunities. Let us avail of the little opportunities that come our way every day-opportunities to be friendly, to be helpful, to be considerate, to be obliging...

Thus we may be spared the ache of loneliness and sadness which good people often experience late in life at the realization of having left undone what they ought to have done.

(Used with permission granted by Dominican Publications, www.dominicanpublications.com. New Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies, by Flor McCarthy.)

Two More Stories

1.) *In the year 1880 in Paris a rather poorly dressed priest showed up at a presbytery looking for a night's lodgings. He had come all the way from Turin, in Italy, and was trying to raise funds to build a church. The visitor's name was John Bosco, but this meant nothing to the resident priest, so he put him in the attic. Many years later when John Bosco was declared a saint by the Church, the priest said, "Had I known it was John Bosco, I would not have put him in the attic; I would have given him the best room in the house."*

We never know exactly who it is we are meeting in the person of our neighbour. But this is not important. What is important is that we see in that person a needy human being, and that we do our best to meet his need. For those with faith, behind the face, no matter how strange, the face of Christ lies hidden.

2.) *Leo Tolstoy the great Russian author, was also a Christian who took seriously the demands of the Great Sermon (Matthew 5-7) and attempted to live his life accordingly. One day, a beggar stopped him while he was out walking and asked him for alms. Tolstoy searched his pockets for a coin but, finding none, he said with regret, 'Please don't be angry with me, my brother, but I have nothing with me. If I did, I would gladly give it to you.' At that, the beggar's face brightened with joy. 'You have given me more than I asked for,' he said, 'you have called me brother!' Tolstoy had not only grasped the intent of the Great Sermon but he had also penetrated the truth of today's Gospel. He regarded the poor man asking him for alms as a brother because he had understood and made his own the great commandment (Matthew 22:37). But, he had also learned to see the face of Christ in the poor and, because of that insight, he met the criteria of judgment set forth for our consideration in today's gospel.*

Preparing The Ultimate Audit

Patricia Sanchez shares this reflection on today's gospel:

Audit-a dreaded idea by most accounts, this five-letter word packs enough emotional and psychological power to cause even the most stalwart of shoulders to sag. The very prospect of someone else scrutinizing our financial records to assess whether or not we have disbursed our funds and made just and honest use of our assets has very little appeal. However, this is precisely the prospect on which today's gospel hinges. Appealing or not, the Matthean Jesus instructs us that, upon his return in glory, each of us will be called to render an account of ourselves and how well or poorly we have made use of our material blessings; in other words, we shall be faced with life's ultimate audit.

One means of assessing how well we are following Jesus' lead may be as near as our checkbook or monthly budget records. In light of the challenge of today's gospel, contemporary disciples of Jesus might conduct a personal inventory of sorts. For example, how much do we spend on fast food as compared to how much of our treasure do we assign to feeding the hungry. Or...how much have we spent on movies, golf, and other recreational entertainment as opposed to what we've set aside for the unclothed, the unwashed and the uncared children of God. How much are we willing to pay for leisurely travel and luxurious vacation packages while many of our brothers and sisters do not even have the security of a home address. As these wander the streets and rely on the charity of others for food and shelter, how concerned have we been and how forthcoming have we been in sharing with them our considerable blessings.

We probably reveal our priorities, our values, our selfishness or our love, our faith or lack thereof more often and more consistently through our use of money and material things than in any other way. On this the feast of our master,

mentor and king, we are challenged to hold ourselves accountable while we prepare to be held accountable by God at our ultimate audit.

Josanthony Joseph writes:

"The world's food production has outstripped population growth by about 16 percent over the last 35 years." Joseph adds that during the Ethiopian famine of 1984, that country used some of its best farm land to grow animal feed for export to Europe. Similarly, in 1995, India exported five million tons of rice and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of wheat and flour when more than one in five Indians went hungry.