



AMDG
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE
YEAR A
26TH NOVEMBER 2017



But Lord, when did we see you in need?

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,
grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery,
may render your majesty service
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.

This Sunday brings the Church's liturgical year to a wonderful conclusion. Christ Jesus, King of the Universe, has conquered death and reigns in eternal glory as our Judge. Those now called to share in his Kingdom are the ones who have tried to reach out in love and care to others – for whatever we do for any one in need, we do as for Christ himself.

In the *First Reading*, the people of Israel have been failed by their own self-serving leaders. But the Lord himself now promises to come as the Shepherd-leader who truly cares for his flock, seeking out the lost, the injured and the weak. He will also sit in judgement when needed.

The familiar *Psalms* is full of strength and consolation. Our Shepherd-Lord walks with us continually, supporting us no matter where life takes us.

The *Second Reading* tells us that the resurrection of Christ is the starting point for all to share in eternal life. At the end of time, all things will be subjected to Christ, and he will surrender the kingdom to the Father. This power of the risen Christ is the power to give life to every one of us.

At the Last Judgement, Christ the King will divide his flock like a shepherd (*Gospel*), separating us in accordance with how we have treated others, especially those in need. All who have tried to act with the very same care that God shows us, will take their place in his kingdom.

This week, I might ask the Lord to show me his own face more clearly in each person that I see, and to help me remember that whatever I do for another, I do it for my Lord too.

FIRST READING: 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.

I settle in my place of prayer and take time to become still in the way that suits me best.

I wait in silence for a while, inviting God to come to me today in whatever way he chooses.

In time, I read and slowly re-read these words.

Perhaps I imagine the Lord speaking them as he looks down over his flock, carefully keeping each sheep within his gaze.

What touches me? I notice anything that particularly draws me.

I may now imagine the Lord addressing me directly:

'I am going to look after you [my name] ... keep you in view ... show you where to rest ...'

I ponder ... how do I feel now?

I share openly with the Lord anything that is in my heart, as with a beloved friend.

God's promise is to tend all of his sheep ... whether they are lost, weak and wounded, or strong and healthy.

How might the Lord be inviting me to help him with this task of caring for his flock ... in my family or community ... my work ... this world?

I ask for any grace I need, whether for myself or another.

Before I end my prayer, I may like to take a moment to give thanks for the 'good shepherds' whose care I have experienced in my own life.

When I am ready, I slowly take my leave, asking the Lord to keep me always within his gaze. *Our Father ...*

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25: 31–46 (part)

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 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 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 or sisters of mine, you did it to me”.’

I ask the Lord to come close as I still myself for prayer,
perhaps focusing gently on my breathing.
I rest here in God’s presence for a little while.

In time, I turn slowly, prayerfully, to Jesus’s description of the Last Judgement.
Perhaps I picture myself before him ... the Christ seated in glory as King of the Universe, yet still my caring Shepherd-Lord.

Taking care not to judge myself, I notice what stirs within me.
Whatever comes to mind, I speak to the Lord openly, entrusting all my limitations and weaknesses to his endless compassion and mercy.

Jesus invites into his kingdom all who have responded to those in need.
I ponder, and am perhaps drawn to reflect:

Am I aware of all the guises in which Christ comes to me today?
... Or do I sometimes fail to notice his face – or even choose to ignore it?

I ask the Lord for courage to acknowledge his presence in all whom I see and meet this day, and to respond with openness and generosity.

I end my prayer with a slow sign of the cross. *Glory be to the Father ...*

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

I myself will show my sheep where to rest ...
I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray,
bandage the wounded and make the weak strong.

First Reading

The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

Responsorial Psalm

Come, you whom my Father has blessed!

Gospel

I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least
of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me. *Gospel*

*This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:
Ezekiel 34: 11–12, 15–17; Psalm 22 (23);
1 Corinthians 15: 20–26, 28; Matthew 25: 31–46*



**‘This I ask you:
be shepherds,
living with
the smell of
the sheep.’**

Pope Francis



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