

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES
Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation



November 23, 2008 Our Lord Jesus Christ the King (Cycle A)

Gospel reading Matthew 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...' 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."

Brief commentary:

Every year on the final Sunday in Ordinary Time the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Christ the King. The feast of Christ the King was added to the calendar of feasts by Pope Pius XI on December 11, 1925. The image of the Messiah King is everywhere in the Old Testament and Christians today hail Christ as King of the universe. The end of the Church year is a time to focus on the end of time. None of us knows whether the end of the world or the end of our life will come first, but from the perspective of our faith our preparation would be the same. Matthew's chapter 25 reaches its climax and conclusion with the scene of the last judgment. This judgment includes all humanity, and "the least" includes all the people who suffer distress of some kind. Therefore, at the end all humanity will be judged by the good done to poor and suffering people.

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- The criterion of judgment will be the mercy shown for the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters.
- We are invited to recognize Christ's presence in the poor and the suffering.
- Rejecting the poor and suffering means rejection of Jesus himself.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Do I see actions such as feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger or visiting the prisoner "kingly"? Do I believe in this kind of king and kingdom?
2. Do I sometimes act as if I were following a "human king and kingdom"? Explain.

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 544; 679; 1033; 1038; 1397; 1825-1826; 2443; 2447; 2831.