

Scripture – Fourth Week of Lent

Matthew 25:31-45

“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 these 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.’”

Reflection

The narration of the separation of the Sheep from the Goats is unique to Matthew’s gospel – and it is strategically situated at the end of the last of the five discourses which form the backbone of this gospel. This is the last teaching of Jesus, his valedictory teaching occurring just before the Passion begins, and therefore it should be considered of particular significance. The prime criterion of judgment is not to be words, but deeds. How one treats “the least ones” will be the true witness of our desire to following Christ, even to the cross.

- Who are the least ones in Portland? How can we assist them immediately? How can we address the long-term situation to change their circumstances?
- Who are the least ones in our nation and on our planet? How can we assist them immediately? How can we address the long-term situation to change their circumstances?

Prayer

O Caring Lord, help me to remember in all that I say and do that now mine are the eyes with which you can look with compassion on this world, mine are the feet with which you now walk to do good, and mine are the hands with which to bless all the world*.

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Amen.

*[*inspired by a prayer of St. Teresa of Avila]*



Mosaic in Basilica of *Sant' Apollinare Nuovo* in Ravenna
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The Cross that Acts

Content for this supplemental Lenten Study comes from the Archdiocese of Portland's Office of Life, Justice & Peace, USCCB and Parish Faith Formation Team

Through what corporal work of mercy have you carried the Cross that Acts?
How does it challenge and transform you?

[Feed the Hungry](#)

There are many people in this world who go without food. When so much of our food goes to waste, consider how good stewardship practices of your own food habits can benefit others who do not have those same resources.

[Give Drink to the Thirsty](#)

Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity. Support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource.

[Clothe the Naked](#)

"The crowds asked John the Baptist, 'What should we do?' He said to them in reply, 'Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none'" (Luke 3: 10-11).

[Shelter the Homeless](#)

There are many circumstances that could lead to someone becoming a person without a home. Christ encourages us to go out and meet those without homes, affirming their worth and helping them seek a resolution to the challenges they face.

[Visit the Sick](#)

Those who are sick are often forgotten or avoided. In spite of their illness, these individuals still have much to offer to those who take the time to visit and comfort them.

[Visit the Imprisoned](#)

People in prison are still people, made in the image and likeness of God. No matter what someone has done, they deserve the opportunity to hear the Word of God and discover the Truth of the message of Christ.

[Bury the Dead](#)

Funerals give us the opportunity to grieve and show others support during difficult times. Through our prayers and actions during these times we show our respect for life, which is always a gift from God, and comfort to those who mourn.

At the foot of the cross, here I am Lord.

