Reflections on the Readings for Christ the King A

Matthew 25:31-46

Finally, we have reached the end of St Matthew's account of Jesus' ministry. At the beginning of the next chapter, he sends some disciples out to prepare the Passover Meal/Last Supper. We are informed that, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory," all will be called to judgement. Then, the judge is introduced as a King. As befits an ending the parable is about the Last Judgement – a judgement based not on how many prayers we might have said, or Masses attended, rather it is based on our response to the needs of others. At a much later date these will be listed together as the basis for "The Corporal Works of Mercy".

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

The image of the shepherd gathering, guarding and leading his sheep is one with which we are familiar from St John's Gospel, and other parts of the Bible. As the Prophet is writing the Jewish people are in exile, banished from their homeland. Although many were deported to Babylon, many others were scattered all over the Eastern Mediterranean. This "scattering" is called the "Diaspora" and to this day it refers to all Jews who live outside Israel. In this Reading Ezekiel looks forward to a time when the Lord, as a Shepherd, will gather all these people together again. That time will be one of great rejoicing. Having said that, the final sentence of this extract refers to the fact that not all of those who have been exiled have been faithful to the Covenant and judgement will also come with the appearance of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

The hope of Resurrection dominates this passage from St Paul's longest, and most pastoral of letters. Having treated all manner of topics that were troubling the community at Corinth – where he had spent a great deal of time – in this final part of the letter he is setting out the basis for his firm hope in Christ. Whatever happens, however difficult times may become, there is no doubt about the final outcome. Christ is risen from the dead, thus conquering the worst of our fears.

Prayer

Christ, King of the Universe, may we be people always ready and willing to reach out to tend to the least and their needs, as you tend to our own. Amen.