

## What Matters Beyond the Seasons

The morning ice on my windshield reminds me that, although it is still fall, winter is just around the corner.

Daily news reports warn us that we are entering a new phase of the pandemic, bringing both challenges and hopes.

This Sunday's celebration of Christ the King brings another church year to a close. Next week is Advent. *Where did the year go?*

We are definitely in a change of season...

In the midst of this change of seasons, this Sunday, we listen to a story about where it's all headed:

When all the seasons have run their course;  
When all the triumphs and tragedies of the human saga  
are exhausted;  
When the last chapter of history has been written.

It will all lead to Christ (Matthew 25:31-46).

And in that moment, time and eternity will converge.

There we will stand. All of us:

Black, white, Asian,  
Indigenous and Swedish,  
people from Palm Springs and Paris,  
from Madrid and Millbury, Osaka and Oakdale,  
athletes and rock stars, attorneys and Uber drivers,

popes and priests, hairdressers and astronauts,  
the famous and the notorious.

What will be remarkable is that in that moment, our titles  
and labels will hardly matter.

Rather, the quality of our having *loved* will rule the day.

Not just love for the people we liked or admired- but love  
for those whose needs are inconvenient and  
overwhelming, our care for those who are abandoned,  
voiceless.

And, the "King" will remind us of what our consciences  
whispered to our hearts while we were alive: When we  
cared for the "least of our brothers and sisters" it was  
Christ that we served.

Compassion is what validates our passports to the  
kingdom...

When the sands of the hour glass of our lives are spent,  
this is what will matter. It will matter eternally.

The message is clear: Live your life ever-mindful of to  
whom we are all headed.

Frankly, sometimes I find it hard to "see Christ" in other  
people.

I find it especially challenging when those "other people"  
are ungrateful, rude, cranky or stubborn. (God forbid, that  
I've ever been one of those people!)

I once got a bit of good advice:

*"If you can't always SEE Christ in others, then just try to BE Christ for others.*

I remind myself of those words when I struggle.

This last Sunday of the church year, as seasons change, reminds us of what will matter in the end and unto eternity.

So, the gospel is both a warning and an opportunity.

Let hope fill your heart and your mind.

Advent, a new season. is just around the corner, brimming with new beginnings for all of us.

*Fr. Steven Labaire*