

**First Reading**

*Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17*

God himself will shepherd the people of Israel.

**Responsorial Psalm**

*Psalm 23:1-2,2-3,5-6*

The Lord is our shepherd.

**Second Reading**

*Corinthians 15:20-26,28*

Because Christ has been raised from the dead, all those who have died will also be raised.

**Gospel Reading**

*Matthew 25:31-46*

Jesus teaches that when the Son of Man comes in glory, he will judge the nations, separating the sheep from the goats.

**Background on the Gospel Reading**

Today's Gospel passage is the conclusion of Jesus' discourse with his disciples. It is about the end of time, the coming of the Son of Man, and the final judgment. We hear this description of the final judgment at the conclusion of our liturgical year, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. In the context of Matthew's Gospel, this passage might also be read as a conclusion of Matthew's report on Jesus' life and ministry; the remaining chapters report the events of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection.

In today's Gospel, Jesus describes to his disciples the scene of the judgment of the Son of Man. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates sheep and goats upon their return from the pasture. The judgments made by the Son of Man will be based upon the acts of mercy shown to the least ones—the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the ill, and the imprisoned. Indeed, Jesus, who suffered on the Cross, identifies himself with the least ones.

Recall that last week's parable of the talents taught us that the gifts that we have been given are intended to be used for the service of others, especially the least among us. Our judgment before God will be based not only on how we have used

these gifts and talents, but also on how we have extended ourselves in service to these least ones. Indeed, Jesus tells us that whenever we have served these least ones, we have served Christ himself.

When we read today's Gospel in the context of the chapters that follow in Matthew's Gospel, we learn the extent to which Jesus identifies with the least ones. In accepting death on the cross, Jesus shows himself to be one of the hungry, the naked, the ill, and the imprisoned. To accept Jesus is to accept him who suffered and died on the Cross as one of the least ones.

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that we will be judged on only one thing: the acts of mercy we have shown to the least among us. Jesus identifies with the least ones; thus we serve Jesus whenever we serve one of the least ones. The Church calls the actions that Jesus described in today's Gospel the *Corporal Works of Mercy*. These works are to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to bury the dead, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick and imprisoned, and to give alms to the poor. In these actions we show God's compassion and mercy to those in need.

As you gather as a family, recall the list of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Talk about some concrete examples of how your family might do these actions in your community and then discuss why it is important.

After you read Matthew 25:31-46. Discuss **Why does Jesus say we ought to do these works of mercy?** It is because whenever we show mercy to another person, we show mercy to Jesus himself. Choose one Corporal Work of Mercy that your family will act upon this week.

Although during this time of COVID-19, it may be difficult, we still need to remember how important these works of mercy are.

Here are some suggestions on how you can accomplish these works of mercy around your home:

### ***Corporal Work of Mercy for Kids***

- **Giving food to the hungry:** Help set the table for meals, help Mom cook dinner, help your little sibling eat, feed your pets without being asked.
- **Give drink to the thirsty:** Run an at-home lemonade stand for little sibs! Give water to your pets and plants, especially on hot days.
- **Shelter the homeless:** Let a sibling play with you in your bedroom or favorite fort, invite over a friend who doesn't have many playmates.

- **Clothe the naked:** Help Mom dress younger siblings, help your siblings find their shoes.
- **Comfort the sick:** Help care for sick siblings: bring them a favorite blanket or stuffed animals, offer to read them a story, make them a special gift or get-well card.

Pray together that your family will see and serve Jesus in the least ones among us.  
Pray the Lord's Prayer or the Act of Love

### **Act of Love**

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured.

Amen.