

The Sunday of the Last Judgment

-Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.(KJV)

The Church prescribes the present Gospel each year as Great Lent draws near. Believers are reminded of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in each suffering person.

This Sunday of the Last Judgment is a good time to call to mind the men, women and children in various residential facilities that are in need of God's mercy. Each believer is to be an active agent of God's mercy.

Facilities exist in communities for homeless families. Men, women and children having no place to live are housed because they are poor, perhaps have been abandoned or abused.

Christians from parish churches showing love and mercy can improve lives for the homeless, the abused in shelters and in rehab centers. Believers giving attention to the hospitalized facilitate healing.

Residential facilities for the mentally ill and mentally challenged benefit from creative parish church outreach efforts. Institutions for delinquent youths are more humane when parish churches take an interest in them.

Hospitals, jails and prisons are places where ministry can take place by priests, deacons and interested parishioners. Parish outreach to nearby institutions is consistent with the present Gospel.

Too often church members are blind or not knowledgeable about confined and institutionalized needy very near to the parish church. The present Gospel is a challenge to awaken to needs and to reach out in behalf of Jesus Christ.

Addressing human suffering requires strong faith. Crime victims suffer. Stress experienced by hospital workers and others working in human caring facilities can be lessened when the local parish church shows genuine support.

The present Gospel is proclaimed in parish churches and monasteries throughout the world. Each attentive listener is to respond according to the current Gospel reading. Jesus Christ is identified with each suffering person.

Caring for a family member, a neighbor or loved one can be a way to live according to today's Gospel. Learning from members in the parish that work in caring facilities is a way to increase personal involvement to meet area needs.

Every person will stand before Christ for the final judgment. Actions taken during the course of daily life will serve as the record for judgment. Christians are to show love and compassion according the Gospel.

Hardheartedness or neglecting the needy nearby puts the soul in peril. Being an active Christian in manifesting love goes a long way in helping persons in need. Jesus Christ is identified with each person including all in need.

God's Holy Church reminds believers to be loving and caring. Personal interests having nothing to do with the Gospel can blind a person to needy nearby. Today's Gospel is a lesson in sensitizing each believer to the needy in this world.

Is there a jail, a prison, a hospital, or a rehab facility near the parish church which would welcome interest from the parish? Are there hungry people in the area or those in need of clothing? Is the parish helping?

Are personal steps being taken by each parishioner to support parish outreach programs for the needy? Is there a residential place for individuals with disabilities nearby that can benefit from parish volunteers?

The Gospel is filled with love. Love is to be the basis for all relationships. Communities improve when Christ's love extends well beyond the walls of the parish church into each place of need.

Showing love to the needy is showing love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Earthly life is limited in time. Making the wisest use of the time of life includes showing love for the needy identified in today's Gospel.

Today is the time to commit to living in accord with the present Gospel. Today is the day to direct daily life towards the Last Judgment, God's kingdom and eternal life.

The Sunday of the Last Judgment. Meatfare Sunday. Venerable Auxentius. St. Cyril, Teacher of the Slavs. February 14/27, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic