

## 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 present Gospel is a firm reminder to be fully conscious of daily life experiences with persons in need. Today's Gospel makes perfectly clear that Jesus Christ is present in the stranger, the sick, the suffering and the imprisoned.

Jesus Christ is present in the beggar on the street or the person in need of clothing or a place to stay. Jesus is present in the stranger showing up at the parish church seeking to be warmly welcomed.

Jesus is identified with the man or woman at the intersection having a sign seeking donations because of being homeless or hungry. Jesus is in the boy or girl coming to school with tattered clothing and having no food to eat at home.

Jesus is present in the neighbor, family member or friend with a life-threatening illness. Jesus is in the son or daughter arrested for drug, alcohol or other criminal offenses.

Jesus is in the man or woman in the cell at the local jail or prison or on a locked ward of the mental hospital. Jesus is in the elderly person living alone with no surviving relatives and without any friends.

Jesus is in the person that shows up at church in poor clothing because he or she is without income. Jesus is in the person who stays home suffering silently because he or she has no means of transportation.

Jesus is in the wife or husband suffering from mental or physical abuse and afraid to ask for help. Jesus is in the co-worker coming to work with minimal food to eat. Jesus identifies with the suffering veterans in long-term care hospitals.

Today the Church wants believers to look with eyes to see the suffering in our midst and to help. The Church wants believers to realize the way we treat the person hurting, hungry or a stranger is our actual treatment of Jesus.

Today's Gospel asks believers to honestly examine the self. Believers are asked to think very carefully about the people they meet and know in daily life. Taking action to help the needy is a step toward God's Heavenly Kingdom.

The present Gospel makes very clear that Jesus Christ is fully aware of believers' personal experiences with persons in need. Each person will face Jesus Christ at the Great and Final Judgment.

Jesus Christ knows the believers that reach out to help the sick, the suffering and the imprisoned. Jesus Christ knows the believers that welcome the stranger, that clothe the needy and feed the hungry.

Today is an opportunity to commit to be more welcoming of strangers at work, in the community or in the parish church. Today is an opportunity to comfort someone you know is suffering.

Today ask God for open eyes to see suffering. Ask God for the vision to see Jesus Christ in each person in need. Ask God for help in beginning anew in the journey to God's Heavenly Kingdom.

Persons in need and suffering appreciate the active love of believers. Parents with a son and daughter having personal difficulties or in prison are strengthened by support and prayers from their parish church.

Families with a member having mental illness are grateful when believers show compassion. Individuals recovering from an accident, surgery or undergoing cancer treatment draw strength from prayers in their parish.

The present Gospel inspires action. The present Gospel defines a pathway to the Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus Christ will return. The Great and Final Judgement will take place. Now is the time to act. God is merciful and loving. God is patient.

Repentance is possible for believers desiring to live in ways pleasing to Jesus Christ. Today's Gospel is a firm reminder to see Jesus Christ in each person in need and to act with compassion.

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The Sunday of the Last Judgment. Meatfare Sunday. February 26/March 10, 2024.  
St. Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.  
Father Rodney Torbic