

Worship@Home 26th November 2023 With Revd Alan Sharp

Opening Prayer:

God, Father of the poor, your Son Jesus was born among us poor, humble and dependent. Open our eyes and our hearts and our hands to honour him now as our Lord and King by welcoming him in those who are hungry and thirsty, in all who are abandoned and lonely, in refugees, in the poor and the sick. Let our love become free and spontaneous, like the tenderness you have shown us in your Son. **Amen.**

STF 333 Majesty, worship his majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNnTFDNPT3U>

Majesty, worship His Majesty:
Unto Jesus be all glory, honour, and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority,
Flows from His throne unto His own,
His anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.
Majesty, worship His Majesty,
Jesus who died, now glorified,
King of all Kings.

Please read: Matthew 25: 31-46

<https://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Matthew+25:31-46>

Time to Reflect

The "Roots" website has an interesting title relating to this week's Gospel: "Do your actions reveal the real you?" It goes on to say that Jesus speaks of judgement in this story about the separation of sheep from goats. The judgement will take place when the Son of Man comes in glory. Those who failed to see and respond to the needs of people around them have failed to see the Son.

I have read that not long before the onset of the cancer that finally killed him, King Hussein of Jordan undertook a small mission. He paid a personal visit to the families of some Israelis who had been killed in an Arab terrorist bombing. There was no talk of money or reparations; instead, the king quietly sat with the mourners and by his calm demeanour, unhurried manner and undivided attention was

able to convey a sense of solidarity with them across the Arab-Israeli divide. The reaction of the relatives was out of proportion to the simplicity of the gesture.

By all accounts, they were deeply moved by Hussein's expressions of personal involvement in their loss. Their grief had been acknowledged. More memorably still, it had been acknowledged and shared by a king.

This Sunday has the title "The Feast of Christ the King." It was Pope Pius XI who introduced the Feast of Christ the King in 1925. He did it in response to growing secularism and secular ultra-nationalism in Italy at the time. Then in 1969, Pope Paul VI decreed that it should be on the last before Advent, and a new Lectionary year. So today reminds us of the Kingship of Christ.

We often think of the humility of Christ, as one who came to serve. He reached out to people who were neglected, even despised, and gave them hope. He rebuked the Pharisees because they condemned such people.

And so, we may not often think of him as a King. But that is the focus of this passage. People are divided as a shepherd separates sheep from goats (often led to pastures together), sheep on the right and goats on the left. And then Christ the King praises those on the right because of their caring - for him - and rebukes those on the left for being uncaring - again to him.

This is one of the most vivid stories Jesus ever spoke, and the lesson is clear -- that God will judge us in accordance with our reaction to human need. His judgement does not depend on deep knowledge of the Christian faith, nor our work in the Church or how much we have put in the offering over the years, but on the help that we have given to others.

In this story Jesus commends simple actions that will not gain headlines. They do not involve giving away great sums of money. They are things that anyone can do. But these actions were instinctive not calculated. The important point is that both groups are surprised - "When was it that we saw you?"

This explains the question on the Roots website “Do your actions reveal the real you?” Are we only caring people when it is convenient, or is it part of our nature?

Are we among the sheep or the goats? One writer gives illustrations of both: “Along with my girlfriend and our baby we were evicted and there was nowhere for us to go. At first, we slept in the car. But you took a personal interest and you put the three of us up in your spare room until we could find a suitable place to go”

Or: “I was dying of AIDS. I was a shattered and broken kid who’d never really had a chance. And the closest you ever came to taking any notice of me was when you wrote to the council saying that you didn’t feel safe to walk down the streets anymore and that they should do something about keeping drug addicts off the streets. And as for dying of AIDS I guess you figured that anyway it was surely the judgement of God for my sinful lifestyle and I deserved to die alone”

Caring is risky! King Hussein took a risk in reaching out to Israeli families, and Christ the King took risks in reaching out to those in need. We are called to follow his example. He will judge us not by our Church attendance but by our actions, or lack of them, towards others.

Prayer of Intercession

For the times when we are sick:

may we have healing.

For the times when we are isolated:

may we have company.

For the times when we are oppressed:

may we have justice.

For the times when we are exposed:

may we have dignity.

For the times when we are mistreated:

may we have humanity.

For the times when we are ignored:

may we be heard.

For the times when we ignore, or isolate, or oppress, or expose or mistreat:

may we change.

Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

STF 707 – Make me a channel of your peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqllzrQqnUg>

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
And where there is doubt, true faith in You.

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is despair in life let me bring
hope
Where there is darkness only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy.
Refrain

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving unto all that we receive
And in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Final Prayers

Loving God, help us to be ‘doing’ people and not always ‘thinking about it’;
help us to be ‘sharing’ people and not hoarders or hidiers;
help us to be people who know we are blessed in abundance by you and, through the power of the Spirit, are eager to pass those blessings on.
We ask in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord lift his countenance upon you,
and give you peace;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you. **Amen.**