

A Throne in my Brokenness?

Christ the King year A

Matthew 25:31-46

This is another gospel passage (often entitled “The Judgment of the Nations”) that can give us the impression that Jesus is a little harsh—to say the least. Last week’s rich man casting into the darkness of the servant who did not “play the stock-market” and increase his funds was a little extreme. This parable also easily comes across as extreme.

This group of servants on the left—the ones like goats, i.e. who do not group as well, less docile and somewhat scrappy—who apparently did not do a good job of caring for the poor, get to join the servant where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Oh, how fun.

Now, what is odd is that *both* groups—the so-called “goats” and the so-called “sheep” address the Son of Man as “Lord”, meaning that they had some sort of relationship. And *both* groups were unaware that Jesus had come to them, in the poor, asking for care. And so, they were on a level playing field.

It is not as though

- the goats were strangers
- Jesus had given clear instructions,

“I will be coming to you in the poor, and will expect you to love me in them.”

If they were clueless disciples, should not Jesus take it easy on them?

“Depart from me, you accursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devils and his angels.”

Such a declaration is excessive, is it not?

Apparently it is not so much a question of knowing but of *acting*, of *being moved in one’s heart to care* concretely.

Recall that Jesus is speaking to *disciples*, i.e. to those who have been gifted with His love.

Jesus is, therefore, speaking to those who should be moved in their hearts.

Jesus gives us His heart, and, for Him, it is a given that there is consequently something in the heart of a disciple, of a child of God that moves to such care, that moves to encountering Him in the poor.

When we say “poor”, we, of course, mean poverty of all types.

We all experience some type of poverty (don’t you just love it!),
and so Jesus, God is to be encountered and ministered to in every person we meet.

This perhaps explains

- why Jesus speaks so very strongly
- why Jesus is so adamant.

“You must love me, for I have given you the love to love me,

- Who indwell the poor in a special way
- Who indwell your poverty in a special way.”

When those who have been gifted to love Him do not,
there is an closing of their hearts to Him.

So, what does Jesus reveal about Himself as king?

This is the feast of Christ the King, after all...

What does Jesus say about Himself as king?

Jesus first reveals that He does not reign as we often envision kings reigning,
i.e. as a powerful warrior in the worldly sense.

Jesus mysteriously reigns in human poverty.

Jesus sits enthroned in human frailty and deficiency.

Jesus thus comes to guide us (the role of a king is to lead) where we least expect it.

Jesus identifies himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the ill, the imprisoned
—literally and figuratively—in us and in others,

and from there He leads us home, i.e. to the mystery of God.

It is only those who let Jesus be king who will enter into the kingdom.

The great challenge for us is to discover and welcome God
in our poverty, and the poverty of others.

If we do not, we will not be disposed in heart to enter the kingdom.

Let us dare to be open.

Let us trust that God indwells our own poverty: how hopeful!

Let us trust that God indwells the poverty of others: how hopeful!

Let us meet Him there and begin the celebration of heaven...