

“Christ the King”

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Matthew 25.31-46
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The end of this year 2023 is approaching, we are one month away from Christmas Day and a little more from the beginning of a new year; There is already a Christmas air in many of our cities. With the end of the year also comes the balance of what has been done and experienced during it; the analysis, the reflection, the regrets for the negative, the regrets for what was not accomplished and the satisfaction for the achievements achieved. Some are even beginning to project 2024, make resolutions and set commitments.

But it is not just the end of the calendar year or the Western calendar. In the Church, this week that begins today, we are experiencing the end of the ecclesiastical year; It is the last week of the liturgical year, the closing of a cycle (in this case, cycle A); and, just as we will do as a family on December 31, today in the Church is a day of celebration, of celebration, because we recognize that everything has its culmination in Christ: the year, also our days, life, the entire creation.

Today on the feast of Christ, the King! It is also the time to evaluate what we have done as Christians, since a cycle closes, we reach the culmination of a process before starting a new one. Let us review, then, our life as Christians, let us evaluate how our configuration with Christ is going.

This Sunday's readings are impregnated with that eschatological spirit (end of times). But not an end full of catastrophes, calamities, cataclysms as many imagine. It is an ending marked by love, charity and hope, because we have the power of a God who is not vengeful but merciful, who knows human suffering, who is attentive to his needs, who protects him, defends his causes and gives justice, as he did with the Jewish people during the exile in Babylon (context of the prophet Ezekiel): God is the hope of the restoration of justice, peace, joy.

That is why he will be a shepherd to his people, he will gather his sheep, rescue them and lead them to good land: "I will lead them to eat the best pastures, in the pastures of the high mountains of Israel. There you can rest and eat the richest pastures. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, I myself will lead them to rest." The end of times is the victory of God reflected in the well-being of the People.

Indeed, "how glorious and rich is the inheritance that God gives to the holy people, and how great and limitless is his power, which works in us believers" (Paul points out in the letter he addresses to the congregation of Ephesus) . It is, then, the Father who, out of love, grants us what is necessary to enjoy the inheritance of the one who resurrected Christ, whom he made Lord of all that exists and head of the Church, that is, the "King", taking everything. to its fullness: "He put all things under the feet of Christ, and gave Christ himself to the church as head of all."

Yes, Christ, as head and culmination, is the King, but what kind of king? Not one dressed in gold and a crown, who seeks honors and to live in the midst of dignities. Jesus Christ is a King modeled on God, lover of humanity, poor with the poor and suffering with those who suffer, which is why his judgment surpasses the traditional figures of punishment, revenge, or heaven and eternal fire. What is truly important in this judgment will be the criterion: charity, love. It is not about who prays more and makes novenas, who offers more and pays stipends, who reads the Bible more and is mortified... What it is about is whether we have been true "Christs" in the midst of our concrete contexts. What did we read today in the Gospel of Matthew? Why were the sheep saved, those on the right? Because they fed those who were hungry, because they sheltered those who suffered nakedness, because they showed mercy to the sick, the prisoner, the outcast, the distressed; This way of life gave them eternal life, because they led an earthly life marked and guided by charity.

To be good Christians is not to be good to an abstract idea of Jesus, but to be good to Jesus himself, the flesh and blood, the suffering and crucified today. But how difficult it is for us to see Christ in the suffering! Surely if we had that capacity we would not hesitate to care for the needy because we would be helping Jesus himself. If we saw

God in others we would not be killing each other among brothers, between people. But, since we do not do so, the wounded, the bombed, the hungry, the migrant, the refugee, the needy... become "simple others", strangers who do not deserve our determination.

We must remember what Jesus himself said: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the most humble of my brothers, you did for me"; Consequently, ignoring the most needy, those who need us today, is ignoring Christ himself who suffers the tragedies of our people. Living in the way of Christ is putting our talents at the service of others, doing everything possible to achieve a better world and, thus, being prepared for the coming and judgment of the Lord. We are prepared? If the Lord appeared to us today, would he put us with the sheep or the goats, on the right or on the left?

Jesus is King, but he is one who breaks the paradigms of a monarch and a kingdom. His reign is not one of fear and terror; His Kingdom is one where everyone lives justice and peace (as Ezekiel points out), where we recognize that Christ is the head (as Paul teaches) and, therefore, he leads us, guides us, orients us, so that we act in coherence with the head, Christ, who calls us to be better humans and better brothers.

A happy end of the liturgical year, a happy day of Christ the King. May today, with greater conviction, when praying the Lord's Prayer, let us affirm and ask God, from the depths of our hearts, that "His Kingdom come!"