

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
The Solemnity of Christ the King-Cycle A
Ez 34, 11-12.15-17; Ps 23; 1 Cor 15, 20-26.28; Mt 25, 31-46
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Merciful Judgment

We celebrate a humble king who died on the Cross. Jesus, who was made man and who took on the form of those who suffer and are marginalized, is our king, with a way of reigning distinct from the way of the world. It is hard for us to understand a king who does not bear signs of royalty in riches, power, and fame, but bears them instead in humility and service.

In the midst of a world of the biased judgments of nations or human persons, where the results of most judgments are condemnatory, who has the exclusive right to be the judge? Even if the idea seems remote to us, we are accustomed to judge, at times more than we are aware. If we ask ourselves about the times that we have judged others and the result of that judgment, we can confirm that there is not much purpose to judging in this way; we are left with a sense of injustice. The reason is clear: it is not up to us to judge, at least not to be usurping the place of God.

The Gospel is provocative in drawing the image of the end of history and of our personal judgment. At the end of our lives, we will have to give reasons for our actions. We do not live for ourselves, but in the reality of a family and universal community that leads us to ask ourselves about others.

Christ, as the King and Judge, shows us the only way that we can judge among ourselves: with royalty and mercy,

in His way. On the other hand, we are reminded that, at the end of our lives, what will count toward living the fullness of eternal life will be love, the way that we allow love to transform us into images of Christ and His mercy for those around us.

Christ finds His power to reign and judge the world in the humility of His earthly existence and He shows us that to reign is to serve. We want to find our own power to be kings and to judge with mercy.

This is the theme that we take with us this week: *merciful judgment*. To make progress in our way of judging, let us think about these three ideas:

1-Let us allow the king to approach.

Ezekiel is sad because the pastors of His people have abandoned the sheep. He tells us about a God who does not abandon us: a God, a pastor and king, *will come himself*; thus Ezekiel repeats three times: *I myself will search for, feed, and give rest to my sheep*. This is about the closeness of the king who is distressed because His sheep are suffering and are far from Him. We allow the king to come near when we don't condemn to marginalization those closest to us; when in place of distancing ourselves, we integrate them into our world of relationships and our relationship with God.

2- Let us be in solidarity with Christ.

We die in Adam and are brought to life in Christ. This is not only to be carried along by the Christ event; it also means to be involved in His salvific movement. We must be in solidarity with His cause, and enter into the same struggles against the enemy, until death is conquered. As we act every day in solidarity with Christ, we advance the plan of Christ and we change our surroundings.

This solidarity in Christ helps us to conquer our fears and our troubles. It permits us to live in the world, but with new status; to live in a world where justice and truth are not a parody, but a reality that is born of our nobility, of our being sovereign in Christ. This can be enjoyed from now on, from interior liberty and peace.

3-Let us take possession of the kingdom.

We aspire to this, to be blessed at the end of our lives, in the personal judgment with a loving choice of God.

We can imagine our earthly death for a moment: we see ourselves in the coffin, when our family suffers and prays at our departure. In this moment (symbolic), we will be in front of the king-judge, and the only thing that will tell about how much we have lived is love, the generosity with which we have learned to love.

We take possession of the kingdom prepared for us from the creation of the world, in advance, when we are capable of judging in mercy; this implies loving those near us, who many times could be hungry for more than just physical nourishment—hungry for forgiveness, companionship, love, or family. Merciful judgment not only anticipates the need for material assistance to the poor, but it also brings them, and whoever is within our reach, a greater mercy.