

# SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

November 23, 2008

EZ34:11-12, 15-17; 1COR 15:20-26, 28; MT 25:31-46

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The end of the world: we don't like to think about it, but the end of time is certain to come. What will it be like? What can we expect? Will we be ready?

Today Jesus answers our questions. He tells us that at the end of time he will come in glory with all the angels. He will sit upon a glorious throne, and all nations will be assembled before him. Jesus explains that he will come as king separating all peoples, and he tells us who will be invited into his kingdom.

The chosen are surprised. They do not realize that in the sight of Jesus they had acquired résumés for eternal life. Jesus tells them his admissions criteria for the heavenly kingdom: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned.

In every instance Jesus names what someone has done for others. He then teaches something that is radical, that changes all conventional wisdom about power, wealth, kingship, privilege, recognition and reward. Jesus teaches us that his kingship, his kingdom, is not about authority and power *over* others but service and love extended *to* others. Indeed, he tells us, where the king resides is not in a palace of pleasure and power. Jesus--Christ the King--makes his dwelling place in the person of the poor and needy. Jesus assures all those whom he invites into the Kingdom: "I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of mine, you did for me."

Jesus' teaching capsizes the popular mentality and the driving force of so much human enterprise that consumes so many people as they compete to achieve contemporary royal trappings: the size of their bank accounts and investments, their place on the career ladder and their political influence.

This year on the feast of Christ the King the world is gripped with panic because the global financial kingdom is collapsing. Some propose that we are witnessing the end times of prosperity as we have known it. And so it may be.

For followers of Jesus, however, our lives are part of the economy of salvation. Jesus has taught us that the only currency that matters is the interchange of human love: treat others the way that you would like them to treat you. The commerce of Jesus' kingdom is a full-time job, a labor of love: feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and visit the sick. There is no risk in this divine economy. The rewards and benefits of goodness and love are secure. They will be given us on that day when Jesus Christ, our King, will say to us: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."