

November 22

❖ SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, ❖
KING OF THE UNIVERSE

(LECT. 160—YEAR A)

Ezekiel introduces the metaphor of a shepherd tending a flock of sheep to describe God's care for us. At the end God judges between sheep and goats, just as in the Gospel the Son of Man separates the sheep from the goats. However, another parallel in the two readings is marked by a crucial difference. In Ezekiel, the Lord God personally looks after and cares for the sheep. But in the Gospel, *we* sheep are called to care for those in need. In one sense, this adds a layer to the metaphor. But in another sense, the action is flipped. Instead of God caring for us, we are told that when we tend to others, we are actually caring for the Lord. "I was hungry and you gave *me* food, I was thirsty and you gave *me* drink . . ." (Matthew 25:35). May we follow the model of the righteous so that even the least among us may be cared for, so that we may spend eternal life with him who is King of the Universe, and "so that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

How can you make the effort to see the Lord in the faces of all those in need?

STR

First Reading

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Matthew 25:31-46

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.