



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

*Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 26 November 2017*

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

On this last Sunday of the liturgical year we are celebrating the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe. His is a kingship of guidance, of service and also a kingship which at the end of time will be fulfilled as judgment. Today, we have Christ before us as King, shepherd and judge, who reveals the criteria for belonging to the Kingdom of God. Here are the criteria.

The Gospel passage opens with a grandiose vision. Jesus, addressing his disciples, says: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne” (Mt 25:31). It is a solemn introduction to the narrative of the Last Judgment. After having lived his earthly existence in humility and poverty, Jesus now shows himself in the divine glory that pertains to him, surrounded by hosts of angels. All of humanity is summoned before him and he exercises his authority, separating one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

To those whom he has placed at his right he says: “Come, O blessed of 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, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (vv. 34-36). The righteous are taken aback, because they do not recall ever having met Jesus, much less having helped him in that way, but he declares: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (v. 40). These words never cease to move us, because they reveal the extent to which God’s love goes: up to the point of taking flesh, but not when we are well, when we are healthy and happy, no; but when we are in need. And in this hidden way he allows himself to

be encountered; he reaches out his hand to us as a mendicant. In this way Jesus reveals the decisive criterion of his judgment, namely, concrete love for a neighbour in difficulty. And in this way the power of love, the kingship of God is revealed: in solidarity with those who suffer in order to engender everywhere compassion and works of mercy.

The Parable of the Judgment continues, presenting the King who shuns those who, during their lives, did not concern themselves with the needs of their brethren. Those in this case too are surprised and ask: "Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?" (v. 44). Implying: "Had we seen you, surely we would have helped you!". But the King will respond: "as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me" (v. 45). At the end of our life we will be judged on love, that is, on our concrete commitment to love and serve Jesus in our littlest and neediest brothers and sisters. That mendicant, that needy person who reaches out his hand is Jesus; that sick person whom I must visit is Jesus; that inmate is Jesus, that hungry person is Jesus. Let us consider this.

Jesus will come at the end of time to judge all nations, but he comes to us each day, in many ways, and asks us to welcome him. May the Virgin Mary help us to encounter him and receive him in his Word and in the Eucharist, and at the same time in brothers and sisters who suffer from hunger, disease, oppression, injustice. May our hearts *welcome him in the present* of our life, so that we may be *welcomed by him into the eternity* of his Kingdom of light and peace.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, last Friday, we were deeply saddened by news of the massacre that took place in a mosque in North Sinai, in Egypt. I continue to pray for the many victims, for the injured and for the whole of that community, so harshly afflicted. May God free us from these tragedies and sustain the efforts of all those who work for peace, harmony and coexistence. Those people were praying at that moment; let us too pray for them in silence.

Yesterday in Córdoba, Argentina, Mother Catalina de María Rodríguez was declared Blessed. She was the Foundress of the Congregation of the *Hermanas Esclavas del Corazón de Jesús*, the first women's religious institute of apostolic life in Argentina. Catalina lived in the 19th century; she was first married and then, left widowed, she consecrated herself to God and dedicated herself to the spiritual and physical care of the poorest and most vulnerable of women. Let us praise the Lord for this "woman enamoured with the Heart of Jesus and with humanity".

I greet all of you pilgrims, who have come from Italy and from various countries: families, parish groups, associations. In particular, I greet the Ukranian community which is commemorating the

tragedy of Holodomor, the millions of victims whom the Stalin regime caused to starve to death. I pray for Ukraine, that the power of faith may help to heal the wounds of the past and promote a journey of peace in the present.

I greet the faithful from Cagliari, Matera, Potenza, Parma, Crotone and Rossano, as well as the Italian association of helpers in the Marian Shrines of the world.

This evening I shall begin my Apostolic Journey to Myanmar and Bangladesh. I ask you to accompany me with your prayers, so that my presence may be a sign of closeness and hope for those peoples.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*