



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Christ the King – Year A**

### ***The Lord of Glory is coming***

*Readings: Ezekiel 34: 11-12, 15-17, Ps 22, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-26, 28, Matthew 25: 31-46*

So here we are, brothers and sisters, at the end of another year – at the climax indeed of another year.

The long liturgical road of fasting and feasting, praying and preparing comes to its summit and summation in the vision of the end time, the triumph of Christ the King. Here we celebrate the re-establishment in eternity of the sovereignty of God over all things and all ages. The glorious union of God and Man in Christ and the reconciliation of the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve are proclaimed in this commemoration of the final victory, won on the Cross of Calvary and revealed in the Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Today we rejoice as the Eternal Word, who deigned to be born of Mary in the humility of our humanity and in the poverty of a borrowed room, brings history to an end and banishes the powers of the dark forever.

Today we see the great angel train that danced in the skies above the Bethlehem hillside, pouring through the heavens escorting this same Jesus to the Judgement Seat before which all creatures must kneel.

It is the final and necessary chapter in the history of Salvation.

The authority for this vision of the end time is no less than Our Lord Himself so I think it is more reliable than the saccharine sentimentalism of the crematorium eulogy which carefully evades the issue of sin and avoids the reality of judgement. Jesus tells us that when the end comes He will come in glory, surrounded by the angelic powers and take his seat on the throne of glory as the nations assemble before Him. It will be a time of separation and that separation will depend very much upon action. The key factors that sort out the saved from the lost are immensely practical.

Did we see and respond to Christ in the other and act with mercy. Indeed the list Jesus gives us become what we know as the Corporal Works of Mercy and they are:

- To feed the hungry;
- To give drink to the thirsty;
- To clothe the naked;
- To welcome the stranger
- To visit the sick;
- To ransom or visit the prisoner
- To bury the dead.

It is scarcely surprising, when we come to think about it, that the Judge of all, who has given His life for us, should judge us on how justly we have behaved.

Righteousness is not a theory. It is alive and active. It is what we must be about. It is not about a decorous theoretical piety or the preserve of the super religious. It is about knowing ourselves saved in Christ and pouring out the love and mercy and gratitude that comes from that on those who are in need both physically and spiritually.

When I preached about the Parable of the Talents last week, one listener told me that she had never discovered her talent in over seventy years.

The Corporal Works of Mercy do not need a talent other than that simple love that comes from the heart of Jesus and there is no higher theological virtue than that.

So we will be judged. That is certain. Indeed if there were no judgement, no justice, we would have no reason to believe in a just God.

The days when Christians were nervous about this are long gone.....but for all the wrong reasons. Our ancestors were anxious that they may not be good enough, that sin may yet delay or destroy their entry to heaven.

Nowadays the tripe offered at the human disposal plants tends towards a picture of the deceased doing the Almighty a favour by turning up in Heaven and being warmly welcomed for his thoughtful patronage of this long stay holiday home. Such paralysing drivel briefly anaesthetises the

mourners but is rapidly dismissed for the implausible twaddle that it unquestionably is.

In the earliest forms of the Rosary, that great Biblical meditation, the final Glorious Mystery was the Last Judgement. As Biblical Christians we need to listen carefully to what Jesus tells us.

We are indeed saved by Faith and the Grace of God. But the evidence of that Faith has a practical outcome in our works. A believer is a doer. There is a humorous postcard about which says, 'Jesus is coming....Look busy'.

It is true, Jesus is coming but 'looking busy' will not be enough. We have to be about His business because, if we are truly Christians, we are His Body on earth and we will naturally and supernaturally be carrying out His will. As fragile and sinful human beings who would not tremble before the might and majesty of the Lord of Glory? But if we are faithful disciples, doing what He asked, then the Gospel also tells us to 'lift up our heads'. Because those who have welcomed and loved and served Jesus at His first coming need not fear His second.

So, like good boy scouts, we must be prepared. Like faithful watchmen we must remind others how the end of the story really goes. Penitence, works of mercy, mission, these remain the key to all our ministries and our sacred duty to all in physical and spiritual need.