

TRINITY NEWS

Last Sunday of Pentecost Christ the King

Today we look at a famous passage from Matthew's Gospel that is about the Christ passing judgment on the world. It looks at ordinary things such as eating and drinking and wearing clothes. It mentions one experience of Christ which he did not actually endure until the last week of his life, that of being imprisoned. He was imprisoned for less than 24 hours, but that time was packed with trials and flogging and excruciating pain and in the end it was only relieved by the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Everyone is on trial in this scene. There are no people to escape judgment. But those who held most liable are not the murderers and rapists and child molesters of the world, but those who have neglected the poor, the dispossessed and those put in prison for their crimes or to suit the political whims of others. It is a strangely one-sided picture of judgment. Like all of the words of Christ, these words contain threads and signs of the mind of Christ. They do not tell us about the whole matter of judgment, but rather of a mindset and a gaze with strange pictures of judgment.

Crimes against humanity are crimes against humanity. Here, Christ puts a huge emphasis on attitude and its consequences, rather than overt crimes. It is not a crime to refuse to clothe somebody unless it is one of our children or a deprived relative. It is a social crime rather than a personal crime if we do not ensure that others are given food and refreshment. It is not a crime to refuse to visit somebody in prison or to entertain strangers. But it is a huge deficit according to Christ to refuse to be interested in anyone who is ostracized by society or lacks the basic human needs of people or the proper clothing to ensure warmth and protection. The most telling words occur towards the end of the passage from Matthew: “Then he will answer them, ‘Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these you did not do it to me’”. We read such words in the prophetic teaching of Christ and we sometimes fail to realize how revolutionary they were in his time, and indeed in our time. Location, location may be the slogan when buying or building a house, but attitude, attitude is a huge thing in humanity. It is the one aspect of our perception that cannot be influenced by circumstance entirely. This is because our attitude is something that we must own ourselves rather than giving it away to false advertisement or manipulation of any kind.

An open and caring attitude attracts openness and care from humanity and from God. A generous attitude that seeks the best in other people and tries to share some of the benefits of privilege is an attitude that comes back to us from those who are of an appreciative attitude

themselves. We are born into the world with the task of expanding our spiritual heart. Christ expanded his spiritual heart until it encompassed the whole world. We know that we may not expand our spiritual heart to encompass the whole world, but we can expand it to the point where it includes many of those who are not part of our immediate circle. The more people that we can include within our spiritual heart in our lifetime, the more we will have served God in the world and benefited the concourse of humanity. That concourse cries out in its needs and looks for those who bear an attitude of openheartedness and compassion for the needs of others. This includes those who are far afield and unknown to the person with an expanding spiritual heart.

Christ only draws pictures of himself that imply kingship when it is attached to the needs of others. This King is beyond even the deepest spiritual heart of earthly kings and the rulers of the world. At the Cross Jesus is called King of the Jews in the words written above him. That kingship was nominated by others, but he used it to bring salvation to all of humanity. This King was born in a stable and he died on the Cross, stricken, not only by his grief for the well-being of humanity, but by their rejection of pure intent and innocence of life as a way of being in the world. Remember, the expansion of our spiritual heart may well be the most profound influence that we can bring to our Christian journey. Mastery of oneself aligned to an ever-expanding spiritual heart has limitless boundaries of influence.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Nov. 21, Monday.

- Finance Meeting, 5:30pm, Parish Office
- Vestry Meeting, 6:30pm, Rectory

Nov. 22, Tuesday.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Discussion @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village), 7:30pm

Nov. 24, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel

ECW GIVING TREE 2011

Beginning next week, ECW members will once again ask your participation in what has become a Holy Trinity tradition since 2007. "Gift ornaments" will be available for you to fill out and select a donation and hang on our Giving Tree. All your gifts collected on December 11 & 18 will be distributed to the 70+ parish families of the Holy Family Organized Mission where our former seminarian, Fr. Gonny Gepayo, is the assistant.

NEXT WEEK. First Sunday in Advent. Parents are asked to bring their children to the church for the lighting of the Advent Candle. After the lighting they will then go to their Sunday School class together with their teachers.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Isaiah 64:1-9a; Ps 80; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9;
Mark 13:33-37