

Reflection for Sunday, November 26, 2017: 34th Week in Ordinary Time.

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Date

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Reading 1

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

Psalm

Psalms 23:1-2a, 2b-3, 5, 6

Reading 2

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

Gospel

Matthew 25:31-46

Lectionary Number

160. Year A, Ordinary Time.

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Reflection:

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Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

One morning while driving to the university I can describe as a rather mystical experience.... There were high winds, leaves twirling and scattering across the road, a flock of birds moving in an opposite direction, clouds of dust from a nearby construction site were rising up giving an awesome translucent hue as if I was gazing through a veil to the scene before me. I felt I was driving into and through another dimension! A feeling of mystery and expectation....

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

This same date, at night, we experienced the cosmic array of Orionids. Above me to gaze upon was a scene of multiple shooting stars, or meteor showers, across the heavens. Not too long ago, too, we witnessed a complete solar eclipse! Wow! The heavens reveal the glory of God! A feeling of awe and wonder...

Yes, God, you are the Christ -- the King of the UNIVERSE! All creation bows in reverence to you. You are so very present!

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

However, in all but one of reading of today, the image isn't a cosmic world, but that of a shepherd. Not quite what people were expecting of a king when Jesus entered the scene. Not a messiah of power to rule a world with oppression, war, revolution and violence. Let us imagine, a shepherd king, under a starry sky caring for the flock with tenderness and love. Such is the metaphor scripture gives us. Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep as a shepherd tends his flock...EZ 34: 11-The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.—Psalm 23

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

With this great feast, we come to the end of our liturgical year only to begin again next week with the first Sunday of Advent. Over a span of a year, we have heard in Scripture of the creation of the world, and the universe in Christ through whom all was created. We pray in our Creed, Through Him all things, visible and invisible were created. We have lived through a cycle of prayer where we have celebrated our King in the Eucharist with Scripture reflecting on and praying with the WORD MADE FLESH—the Christ. Jesus has taught us the way to discipleship while giving us a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. For when I was thirsty, you gave me a drink; hungry, you gave me food; imprisoned, you set me free; naked, you clothed me. What you did for the least of these, you did for me. Remember the Beatitudes? Blessed are you who do all these things and yours is the Kingdom of heaven! Christ our Shepherd King gave us a new law of love and showed us how to live it in right relationship with God, self, others and the universe. He is the Lamb of God, the King who gave his life that we may have eternal life: Christ has been raised from the dead...in Christ shall all be brought to life.

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

Theihard de Chardin, S.J., Jesuit scientist and mystical theologian, said that cosmic energy is Love. This Love is the energy of Christ, our Shepherd King who draws us to the Omega Point, the Christ, where all creation is in process of returning to, and, into the fullness and knowledge of the Reign of God. Come you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

The Hymn of the Universe, one of my favorite books by Chardin, is an invitation to celebrate with gratitude our union with Christ, in a profound prayer of offering located in the opening chapter, The Mass on the World... Let us pray...

"One by one, Lord, I see and I love all those whom you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one also I number all those who make up the other beloved family which has gradually surrounded, me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, ... again one by one—more vaguely it is true, yet inclusively, I call before me the anonymous whole...of living humanity; ...those who ...today will take up their impassioned pursuit of the light... Receive, O Lord, this all embracing host which your whole creation, moved by your magnetism, offers you at this dawn of a new day...Lord Jesus, you are the center toward which all things are moving...the unity of the new earth."

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

Many of us will gather to celebrate the Eucharist this day. We may sing an old but familiar song, The King of Love My Shepherd Is. May our Shepherd King of the Universe, the Christ, surround us, and enfold us in LOVE as we live into the coming of the New Creation. Here we will meet our Shepherd King face to face—The Christ, King of the Universe.

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On January 9, the day after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Roman Catholics entered upon the first span of that liturgical season called "Ordinary Time." This "green" season is generally composed of five or six weeks between the end of the Christmas Season and the beginning of Lent and a span of 25 or 26 weeks, lasting from Pentecost through the Solemnity of Christ the King (celebrated on the 34 th Sunday of Ordinary Time). And, to be honest, as I grow older, I appreciate the stripped-down quality of Ordinary Time more and more. At the core of this span of time is the realization that the mysteries we celebrate in these other seasons are so rich, so wonder-ful that we need time to make sense of them. Advertising.