

# Living the Gospel in Everyday Life....



34th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Feast of Christ the King  
November 20, 2011



## What's Going On Here?

**GOSPEL:** 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,

**JUST SAY YES.** Matthew brings us to the end of the liturgical year with a powerful, multi-faceted message. It is a message that reveals both the magnificent blessings that await the faithful disciple of Jesus and the perseverance of our loving God who keeps calling us, even to the very end. It is also a message reminding us that serving God well does not require extraordinary feats but rather is best exemplified in simple acts of lovingkindness toward the poor, the forgotten, the suffering, the least of our sisters and brothers. It is a message that says, once we have committed ourselves to living the Gospel in everyday life, those loving actions become so second-nature that we'll be surprised when God notices and commends us for having done them. The apocalyptic language of Matthew can be daunting; yet, why should we be surprised at the magnificence of Jesus' final victory? Matthew reminds us that God's kingdom was prepared for us from the foundation of the world; it is a kingdom we were meant to inherit from the moment God prayed us into existence. It is a victory won over and over again in the here and now every time we give and receive love. Jesus' return in glory is no less than his final, dramatic invitation and proclamation of welcome to the kingdom. He so wants us to R.S.V.P. with a yes that he does whatever it takes to get our attention. All through our lives we are given opportunities to choose, and, somewhere along the line, we make a definitive choice. Can we not just imagine the two groups described in this gospel, standing before Jesus, and Jesus looking at them with eyes of love, proclaiming, "Look what I've been preparing for you. Come, the kingdom is yours. I don't care where you've been or how long it's taken you to get here. It's not about that. *It's about our loving.* Just say yes and come, you who accept the blessing."

## Questions For Reflection

- \* *In what ways have I been receiving God's invitation to the kingdom?*
- \* *Is Jesus' second coming a scary thought or one that I face with eager anticipation?*
- \* *How natural do acts of lovingkindness feel to me? Am I sometimes wary about reaching out in love?*
- \* *What difference does it make in my life knowing that the victory of love has already been won?*
- \* *How do I feel about inheriting a kingdom of love that was prepared from the "foundation of the world"? How can I make that kingdom more present in the present?*