

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

21/22 November 2020.

I'm not going to wax on too lyrical about the great parable in Matthew's gospel pertaining to the final universal judgement. I've written to you about it in my Pastor's Pen so you can read there what I've said. Suffice it for me to point out, as I did in my homily last weekend, that if we're going to begin everything with the end firmly in our minds, then this parable simply can't be bettered. It vividly paints a picture of what awaits us all, both at the time of our death and at the end of time itself.

St. Paul, and the people and early Christian communities he dedicated himself to serving, were concerned about the end just as much as we are today. In our 2nd reading Paul lays out for us his vision of where we are headed and how it will all finish up. For Paul and I trust for us, everything revolves around the crucified and risen Christ who now reigns as Lord of the universe. His mission, a mission in which we play still our vital parts, is to bring everything and everyone together into one kingdom and present this kingdom to God. He can do this because life is in Him, a life that death and all deathly, destructive forces and powers cannot thwart.

The end point we're moving towards is unity when God becomes all in all, a oneness won by Christ for us and for the world. This unifying process continues to be worked out in history by Jesus Christ's Holy Spirit and by those like us who live in His Spirit, a Spirit of service and loving sacrifice, some examples of which are given to us in the gospel.

In filling out this vision further the 1st reading tells us that our God and King is not to be feared but instead is like a shepherd, a good, kind, loving

shepherd who unites what is divided, finds and restores what is lost and broken, heals those that are hurt and rescues us from the mists of confusion and darkness. This is exactly what the Psalm we proclaimed tonight said, is it not?

All of this transforming work is happening now, quietly, often unseen and unheralded. It happens when people like us reach out in love and care helping the hungry and thirsty, the naked, sick, imprisoned and lonely and when we welcome strangers who come amongst us. How wonderful it is if we do these generous acts aware that our Lord and King is living in the very people we help! But, as Jesus makes clear, this is not essential. As long as we shepherd well on our shared journey through life the least with us, that alone is enough to number us amongst the sheep who will inherit the Kingdom God has prepared for us since the foundation of the world.

This is the end we must keep in mind when we begin, and every day that we try with God's help to practice and live out the values of our faith, a kingdom so beautifully proclaimed in the Preface for this Solemnity, an eternal and universal Kingdom of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace. As this year full of great dramas and challenges comes to its end with our new Church year beginning next weekend, let's not forget this goal towards which we are headed, the end which gives meaning to us and to all that we do in this present but passing age.