**Reflection for Christ the King – 22 November 2020**(Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24, [Psalm 95:1-7](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#ps2), Ephesians1:15-end; [Matthew 25:31-end)](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#gsp1)

A crow once flew into the sky with a piece of meat in its beak. Twenty crows set out in pursuit of it and attacked it viciously. The crow finally let the piece of meat drop. Its pursuers then left it alone and flew shrieking after the piece of meat. Said the crow: ‘It is peaceful up here now. The whole sky belongs to me.’

 Anthony de Mello, The Song of the Bird

It is the end of the church year and nearly the end of 2020. The time has come when we realise there is more of the year behind us than ahead. A year like no other in recent times. Perhaps, more than usual, a year littered with regrets at what we have had to let go, missed out on or lost, cannot now retrieve and fear may not return.

In last week’s reflection, we were encouraged to stare fear in the face and take risks as followers of Jesus, and live in anticipation of his return. It takes courage to look behind, recognise and mourn our losses; yet it is equally brave to look ahead and see what we have to gain in the riches of our glorious inheritance. The whole of heaven belongs to us.

We end this Kingdom season remembering our ultimate future, just as in Advent we begin to await the past in the birth of Jesus, the King above all kings. The year ends as it began, with our future hope in God’s Kingdom here on earth, as it is in heaven.

Our hope rests in a Kingdom present in Jesus now (and coming in all its fullness when he returns) that holds Beatitude values as the highest, in stark contrast to the world’s. Where meekness, mercy, hunger for justice, peace-making (and deep sorrow at their absence) are a fitting triumphal fanfare at the feast of Christ the King. The humble servant King who reigns over all things, but who rules in love, by peace and through reconciliation.

Are we able to see our King with the eyes of our hearts? If not, how else can we respond, as we are called to, and put His rule first in our lives as citizens in His kingdom.

“*When was it we saw you*?” The King is asked the same question by two groups of people mentioned in today’s Gospel. Both the proactive sheep and the inactive goats appear baffled to have learnt Jesus was present in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger and the prisoner. Interesting. Both groups failed to see.

We naturally hope we are able to see and so be counted amongst the sheep, not the goats, but is it possible for us to be in the third group mentioned, and be “*one of the least of these who are members of my family*”?

If we are among the *least* also needing to be served, then there is far more to this Gospel story than a call to charitable action that makes us feel guilty, as we check off of our good deeds in the hope we end up on the right side of Jesus.

Charity is not the same as, nor a substitute for, a family relationship which can be long, short or even momentary. In even the most transitory encounter we are to look each other truly in the eye, see Christ there, and keep our hearts open to anything we need to learn.

That takes courage, because we know how often that what we might see reflected back at us in the eyes of others are our own fears, inadequacies and inability to do what is necessary or provide what is needed. We may very well then find ourselves amongst the *least*, needing help from others as a member of our Lord’s family.

We are not alone. Today, when I am floundering and cannot cope, you can. When I do not know what to do or say, you may; and at the very least we can talk about it. Tomorrow when you are anxious, I feel calm. We all hold each other up as best we can.

Sheep, goats, least, last or lost - we are one flock - and our servant King is also our Shepherd, who seeks us out and laid down his life for us all.