

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD
THIS WEEKS SCRIPTURE
CHRIST THE KING Year A

First Reading

A reading from the book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

The Lord will judge between sheep and sheep

The Lord says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest – it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

As for you, my sheep, the Lord says this: I will judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats.

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of S Paul to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28

Christ will hand over the kingdom to God the Father; so that God may be all in all

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25:31-46

I was naked and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me

Jesus said to his disciples: 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

'Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

'Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me."

'And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

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LECTIO DIVINO "SACRED READING"

The simple prayer practice of Lectio Divina takes us through four movements, as we are drawn closer to The Father through each prayerful reading of the Scriptures. Choose a short Bible passage from today's scripture or even just a few verses.

PREPARATION Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible. Begin with silence for a few minutes, humbly asking the Father to quiet your heart and make you aware that you are in His loving presence. When you are ready, begin reading and praying through the four movements, described below. With time and practice, these movements will become simple and easy as they flow naturally from one to the other

1 LECTIO (READ) On the first reading, simply open yourself to the presence of God. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully, allowing short pauses between sentences. Over time you will discover whether it is more helpful for you to read silently or out loud. Try them both. As you read, take in the words and the overall flow of the passage. Then allow a time of silence following the reading continuing to open yourself to God's Spirit.

2 MEDITATIO (RECEIVE) On the second prayerful reading of the passage, listen for a particular word or a phrase through which the Father wants to speak to you. You will notice your attention being drawn to something. Once you have "received" the word or phrase, begin to silently meditate on that. Reflect on why the Father would highlight this for you today, ask Him any questions that come to mind, and note things that seem important as you meditate on what He has given you. Remember that the focus is on listening to what the Father has to say to you.

3 ORATIO (RESPOND) On the third prayerful reading of the passage, listen now for the Father's invitation, and respond from your heart. The Father is always inviting us in some way... to let go of something, or to take up something; to do something or be something. The invitation can take innumerable forms. Following the reading, continue to listen for His invitation and then respond silently or out loud from an honest heart.

4 CONTEMPLATIO (REST) The focus of the fourth prayerful reading of the passage is to simply rest now in the love that the Father has for you. Let the words wash over you. There is no further need to reflect or respond as you simply allow the Spirit to draw you close and fill you with His love, grace and peace. Linger in this place of deep connection. You are being filled and refreshed for your continuing journey. Take your word, phrase or image with you. It is something to which you can return throughout the day. A reminder of the love of the the Father for you and the special word He had for you today

Adapted from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5509e3fe4b05a1b232493c31f58c5a5002009e3e84d64036/1489347840535/Lectio+Divina+Guide.pdf>

PRAYER PSALM

Psalm 22(23):1-3a,5-6

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

