

## Make Your Choice

This is the last Sunday of the Church year, which year, as you know, is different from the calendar one. Next week we will begin the new year, starting with Advent, our waiting for the birth of Jesus into the world. On this last Sunday of the year, the Church appropriately celebrates the feast of Christ the King.

Here is the story of this king of ours.

First, God continually sought out his people throughout history, inviting them to a covenant relationship. But the "shepherds of Israel" let God's sheep scatter over the face of the earth. They actually made meals of the sheep instead of feeding them. So God said the words of the First Reading. "I myself will look after and tend my sheep. The injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal."

God's care for his people is exquisite, and it is the foundation of all our belief. He shepherds us today in the same way.

The Responsorial Psalm, "The Lord is My Shepherd," is used here simply as a reply to the First Reading. To paraphrase, "We see that God is shepherding us, as he promised. Goodness and kindness are given abundantly. God lets us walk beside restful waters, through green pastures." We are filled with gratitude.

People of different generations sometimes remember and sometimes forget God's love. The ones who forget it fill their lives with other gods, whichever seemed most attractive. Idols, these are called.

So, in the Second Reading, St. Paul tells us about Christ, who is God's shepherding made flesh. Although death and sorrow and sin have been on the rampage, Christ brings the First Reading's light and peace and wholeness.

Then the Gospel tells us in a parable who will receive this light and peace. Not every one can be counted among God's beloved sheep. Some people have been goats instead.

How do you know which you are? The standard is extremely clear. Have you cared for the hungry? Have you given water to the thirsty? What about welcoming the stranger, and giving clothes to those who have none and what about visiting people in prison? This is what God did in the First Reading. It is what Jesus did in his life on earth. It is the loving duty he has entrusted to us who are his body, his band of shepherds. If you have joined this group, then you are one of the sheep who have received Christ's love and who are very grateful.

But maybe you or I have never taken time to care for Christ's least brother or sister. Maybe we are goats.

If we keep on that way, we should not be surprised when God says at the end of time,

You never did pass on to others the care I gave to you. You did not let me into their lives. If you had, your gratitude for my love would have led you to them! I care to shepherd you even now, but all I can do is affirm the choice you have made with your life. You have chosen to live without me, your God, and I must respect your choice.

This is how a real King acts. He respects and honors his subjects' needs and desires. We have to ask ourselves in freedom which side we are on right now.

Before it is too late.

John Foley, SJ

## Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe November 22, 2020

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#### **Sacrament of Reconciliation & Sacrament of the Sick**

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and penitent will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick is available for those who are in need, terminal and to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.

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Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house  
of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our  
faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you  
Welcome!  
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*The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of  
the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone  
and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong  
community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy  
Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are  
committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.*

