

# Life is God's gift to you. What you do with that life is your gift to God.



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

Today's Gospel can seem overwhelming, even scary. At the end of history Jesus divides people into two groups: sheep and goats. The sheep enter eternal life and the goats go off to eternal punishment. The sheep unknowingly cared for Jesus who was hungry, outcast, ill and imprisoned. To use St. Teresa of Calcutta's phrase, they served Jesus in "his most distressing disguise." The goats, on the other hand, neglected to care for Jesus in disguise.

How should we understand this parable of sheep and goats? It's important to recall the context. It comes right after the parables of the talents and the ten virgins in the wedding party. He gives gifts and talents - and expects a return.

God wants us ready because he comes unexpectedly. He comes in surprising ways - perhaps none more surprising than what Jesus tells us today, in the disguise of the hungry, the imprisoned, the ill, the outcast.

In recent weeks, months and years our parish has reached out to the homeless and those in need, especially through the Food Pantry and St. Vincent de Paul ministries. Thank you to all of you for supporting our various ministries so we can reach out to those who are hungry, forgotten, ill, outcast.

God has given us gifts of time, talents and material resources. The second reading has a phrase that should help us invest our gifts. St. Paul talks about "first fruits." We've received the first fruits of Jesus' sacrifice. He wants us to dedicate our own first fruits back to God.

On this Last Sunday before Advent 2020 let's remember this: God has established a partnership with us. He has given us gifts and expects a return - first fruits. And he comes in surprising ways - as St. Teresa of Calcutta said, sometimes in a most distressing disguise. "Whatever you did for these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Finally, as we celebrate today the Sunday of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe let us recognize again Christ as First Fruits - as the source of our redemption, that Jesus died for each one of us. He belongs to us like grapes on a vine. He is the first fruits of our redemption. He belongs to us and we belong to him. He is our personal Savior and King.

Have a Blessed Thanksgiving Week!

*Fr. Rafal Ligenza*

St. Joseph Parish Administrator

