



**THOUGHTS FOR THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING  
(SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT)  
22 NOVEMBER 2020**

*Stir up Sunday*

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24, Ephesians 1:15-end, Matthew 25:31-end

*Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people: that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord, says today's post communion prayer, which is the prayer book collect for this Sunday next before Advent, rather than for what is now the Feast of Christ the King. Never more than this year, however, do I feel the need to make this my prayer. I feel myself slipping into a torpor in which the days pass pleasantly enough, but nothing seems to be achieved, and I have the nagging feeling that there is something I should have done, but I cannot think what it is. This is the consequence of this second 'lockdown', when the weather is not good enough to make even tidying up in the garden attractive, and my will definitely requires some stirring up. Perhaps you feel the same?*

Let's, then, see if today's lessons have anything to help us. In the first reading, Ezekiel is speaking to the people who have been taken into exile in Babylon and, by this point in the book, the temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed and all hope is gone. But Ezekiel sees something better coming – good times for God's people will come again. Look again, though, and see who it is that God is going to rescue - the strayed; the injured he will bind up and the weak he will strengthen, whilst the fat and strong he will destroy. Those who had sharp elbows and shouldered their way to the front, God will reject, but he will seek out those who had been scattered.

This theme is very much taken up in the gospel reading for today. Jesus identifies himself absolutely with the poor and downtrodden; the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner. He goes further and says that anyone who has come to the aid of any of those unfortunates has done those acts of charity to him, personally, and, in doing so has done it not just to a much loved chum, though he is that, but also to the one who has come in his glory to sit on his throne, with all the angels with him. This is truly Christ the King, who identifies utterly with the poor and destitute.

S. Paul, in the second reading for today, tries to capture a sense of the awesomeness of the risen Christ, seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name, not only now, but also in the age to come. And yet it is this Christ to whom one can minister by paying attention to the weak that the world ignores at best, or, more likely, actively ill treats.

So, good times are coming; not for those who seek their own interests, but for those who seek to make Christ their king by ministering to others. Pray that our wills might be stirred up that we might bring forth good works.

Clive Lemmon