

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Mt 25:34)

November 21, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe, and the last Sunday of our liturgical year. In the gospel we hear the story of the separation of the sheep from the goats. There is an underlying mandate to be the sheep who go out of their way to treat others, with dignity and respect, no matter their situation in life. It is a story that reminds us to love God in and through our neighbor. In honestly doing so, we prepare ourselves for the kingdom that is prepared for us.

How do we do this in these challenging times? Covid-19 cases are on the rise. Hospitals and workers are stretched to their limits. We are under a county stay-at-home advisory. And we are experiencing pandemic fatigue as we continue to keep ourselves and others safe. Meanwhile, other areas of life are causing us concern and stress, like the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.

We need to take comfort in our first reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel. Where God says: *“I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. To the lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.” (Ez 34:15-16)* God has not abandoned us, but rather stands with us during these challenging times. Through His son, hope is given to those who open their hearts and minds to their brothers and sisters. The true challenge is to become creative in reflecting this hope so we can share it with others.

This upcoming Thanksgiving holiday is the perfect time to find creative ways to reach out to family, friends and neighbors. We may not have the traditional celebrations that we look forward to every year, but it presents us with a unique opportunity to bring a true understanding of thankfulness and gratitude. Let us not be disappointed by what’s missing, but rather embrace with joy this occasion to express gratitude to our brothers and sister by delivering creative acts of kindness. A phone call, email, text message, written note or even a simple smile or hand wave can have life changing effects. We are the instrument that God uses to shepherd his people.

I myself have been shepherded by so many people’s creative expressions of support as I work through my cancer treatment and Covid-19 virus. It is very comforting to know of the many prayers for me and my family offered by members of the parishes. I am grateful also for the priests that help keep our Mass schedule. Unfortunately, after consultation with my oncologist, he encourages me to follow a 28 day protocol before resuming public Masses. This is to ensure that the virus is no longer a cause for concern, and at which point I can safely return to distributing communion. Though this is disappointing, it is what needs to be done to ensure the health and safety of parishioners. With that said, I will be medically cleared to celebrate public Mass beginning December 7th. I’ve never been a patient before this experience, and I’m learning to listen and appreciate this new perspective.

Giving Tuesday is just around the corner on December 1st. “We Give Catholic” is an easy way to show your support for your parish as we use the funds to enhance our parish experience. Go to the parish website for an explanation of this program and to learn more about the project that these funds will support.

I wish you all a blessed Thanksgiving. I hope each of you makes time this week to consider the things for which you are grateful – from a meal on table and roof over your head to the people that positively impact your life... and every sunrise, breath of fresh air, and chocolate milkshake in between. And lastly, I encourage you to be the shepherd of the flock around you – within your family, around your neighborhood, and across your community – demonstrating that gratitude and love are far more powerful than the pandemic surrounding us today.

Christ’s Peace!!

Fr. Workman