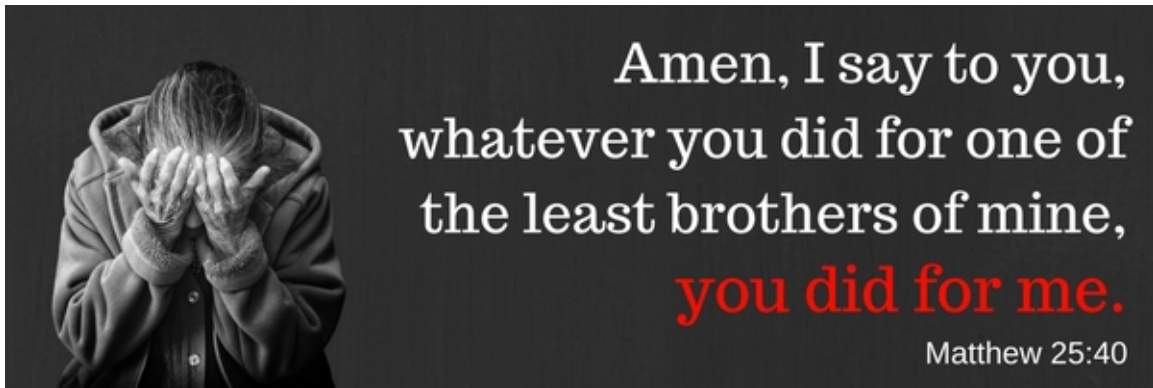


THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

November 26, 2017

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17 + 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28 + Matthew 25:31-46



Reflection by: Mary Lanni, OPA

Matthew presents us with a majestic picture of Jesus seated on a throne, surrounded by angels, with all nations assembled at his feet. He is King of the Universe about to judge who will be invited to enter heaven. Despite the grandeur of the scene, Jesus' standard for admission is simple: Did you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger and care for those in prison? Did you recognize me in the least of my brothers and sisters?

Currently the statistics about charity and service to the needy throughout the world are impressive with the United States being at the top of the list of most generous. According to the National Philanthropic Trust, Americans gave \$389.05 billion to charity in 2016, an increase of 4.2% from 2015. The largest source was from individuals. The majority of charitable dollars went to religion, education, human services, grantmaking foundations and health. In addition, 63 million Americans, 25% of the adult population, volunteer their time, talents and energy to make a difference in the lives of those who are struggling.

This is all good news, but it could lead us to believe that the injustice, bigotry, oppression and neglect directed at the least in our society by the more favored is being taken care of. Jesus —by his two questions— is telling us to root out the feeling of “them and us,” to really feel the pain, anguish and despair of another human being stripped of dignity and self-respect, and to stand in solidarity with these “least of our brothers and sisters” even until the end of time.