

Lectionary Texts for November 26, 2017 • Christ the King Sunday - Year A
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 • Psalm 100 • Ephesians 1:15-23 • Matthew 25:31-46



Matthew 25:31-46

Deeds of Christian Charity, 1575

Oil on panel in the National Museum in Warsaw

by Pieter Aertsen, Dutch, c. 1508-1575

The Gospel of Matthew names six acts that can make a difference at the time of the Last Judgement: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, give shelter to strangers, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and visit the imprisoned. Pope Innocent III added “bury the dead” in 1207, based upon a reading of Tobit 1:17.

Aertsen has shown each of these in this crowded painting. Cheese and bread is being distributed at several places, water jugs are present; two men on the right are being welcomed

Continued

through the gate; clothes are being distributed on the left; a person in bed is being visited in the upper center; a prisoner is being visited in the upper left; and dead are being buried in the upper center. Above the arch on the gate at the right is “Mat XXV”; Aertsen clearly wishes to acknowledge his source of inspiration.

Aertsen worked in both his native Amsterdam and Antwerp, the latter being the center of artistic life in the Netherlands. He is credited with the invention of the monumental genre scene, which combines both still life and genre painting, often including a biblical scene in the background. The foreground of his *A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551, has hanging carcasses of meat and poultry, sausages, fish, and cow and pig heads, while in the distant background, through an opening in the stall, Mary and the infant Jesus can be seen distributing alms.

— *Art curated and narrative provided by Norman Mahan*

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Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’

“‘And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’

“‘And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

“And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

“Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

“Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’

“Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”