Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.
The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
AMS Annual Benefit
21 November 2026

On my dresser down the street from here is a copy of the Good Shepherd, a pagan statue that was "converted" into one of the favored images of the New Testament for the pastoral care of the Lord Jesus and those who work in His name. It became especially important to me as the Church asked me to minister in ways that seemed so removed from that direct pastoral care, which, however, remains fundamental to all that we do in the Church.

The notion of the Good Shepherd, so clear in the first reading and Psalm gives way to the final judgement. In my distant past I remember exams. At the Gregorian University where I did graduate studies in Theology and Canon Law you would receive a list of topics from the course, but you would not know which one the professor would put on the final exam. There are many funny stories about attempts to get around the system.

We do not have that problem with the exam at the end of our lives or, for that matter, at the end of the world. The Lord tells us very clearly what questions He will ask or, better yet, on what basis we will be judged. In a very real sense, He is the Good Shepherd who leads us to the fullness of life and invites preparation for the judgement not as a cramming at the last minute, but as a way to live every minute of every hour of every day.

We remember on this Memorial of the Presentation of Our Lady the reflection of Saint Augustine, everyone's new favorite Doctor of the Church. Mary "kept God's truth in her mind, a nobler thing than carrying His Body in her womb."[1] It is a useful notion as we prepare for the final test.

On this Sunday, the last before the new liturgical year, we celebrate Christ the King. In year A, He is probably given His most regal appearance, because B has Him judged before Pontius Pilate and C as a criminal on the Cross. However, in all of these events He is sovereign, but truly the Good Shepherd leading His people to life.

How do we follow the Shepherd so that we are ready to meet the sovereign Judge? The first principle is to treasure our rebirth in the waters of baptism. We rose from that font into eternal life and every subsequent step is an opportunity to reaffirm that life. Curiously, the invitation is to see the Lord.

---

[1] Saint Augustine, *Sermo* 25, 7-8; PL 46, 937-938.

If the *Washington Post* were to carry a story in the morning about an appearance of Jesus Christ on the mall, you would have to have the police and perhaps the National Guard downtown to control the crowds, establish order, and maintain the peace. Yet He is present in so many dramatic ways. He will nourish us with His Body and Blood in a few moments.

However, the beloved members of this global archdiocese do not always have the luxury of daily Mass or even the choice of its time. Yet they are not deprived of one presence of the Lord. In the Gospel, He identifies Himself with those in need: the hungry, thirsty, naked, ill, imprisoned, homeless, or a stranger. Lest there be any doubt, stranger is the immigrant as was Israel so often in her history. Those categories are really amplified to anyone who needs us, because that individual is the Christ calling our name.

He has taught us that truth and you have responded. You join us this evening to share in the mission and the ministry of this archdiocese. Many of you by experience have seen Christ on the battlefield and responded to His needs. Others want to assure that His human mirror has the opportunity to receive the sacraments, deepen his or her faith through catechesis, be accompanied on the last journey, or enjoy the consolation of the faith in one of the 153 medical centers of the Department for Veterans Affairs. There is no dichotomy between living the Gospel and carrying for the person in uniform and family in their need. I thank you for your vision and making possible the ministry entrusted to me.

We renew our desire to celebrate with Saint John of the Cross who promised: “In the evening of our lives we will be judged on our love.” If we saw Him in our sisters and brothers in need, if we proclaimed His truth, even when unpopular, and if we have sought His will in the confusion and heat of the daily battle of our lives, He will invite us to be on His right and enter the Kingdom prepared for everyone.

If we have striven to say to the Father: “Thy will be done.” Then, we will be saved. Otherwise, He will say to us: “Thy will be done,” and we will find ourselves on the left among the goats.[2]

The victory mentioned by Saint Paul is not on the traditional battlefield, but rather the journey through life with its vicissitudes, joys, trials, temptations, and distractions. We depend on the Good Shepherd to help us steer the course, persevere in the midst of adversity, and not lose sight of the ultimate goal, which is union with the One who calls us. We who have been born from above in the waters of baptism, to borrow from Dr. Kreeft, “are like a pregnant woman who has a second life in her. You are either pregnant with Christ’s life or not; you cannot be half pregnant.”[3]

That war language that Paul uses leads to the submission of all the enemies. It is a complete and total victory. Every enemy will submit to the will of the divine King so that the Son will consign to the Father the work He has completed so that so that “God may be all in all.” It is not the passage to the cold war or other fronts. Rather the victory is complete and definitive. However, as the first reading reminds us, God never applies justice without love.

---

[2] Cf. Peter Kreeft, *Food for the Soul* A, p. 780
[3] *Ibid*.

Note that in this moment of judgment, the Lord sends those on His right to the fullness of life. In death, as the first Preface for the Dead reminds us, life is not ended, but merely changed. Paradise is the completion, the fullness, and the definitive victory. If we pray earnestly for our beloved deceased in this month of November, it is to beg for them the fullness of life. That is especially true for those who perished during or after selfless service to the Country.

The message in this Gospel passage is so direct and so clear. In the heat of the question about migrants and care for the poor, my thoughts and reflections often returned to this passage. When a woman wrote to me during my mandate as the President of the Episcopal Conference and complained about the Bishops' teaching with nasty disrespect, I succumbed to weakness and responded that she should read this passage and think about her response to the Lord Jesus on Judgment Day. She wrote back and told me to read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

I confess that not knowing whether to laugh or cry, I simply prayed for her.

Join me in finding encouragement in the exhortation that Pope Benedict XVI delivered to the faithful of Benin when he consigned a post synodal exhortation on Africa: "..I invite you to renew your decision to belong to Christ and to serve his Kingdom of reconciliation, justice and peace. His Kingdom can be threatened in our hearts. There God comes face to face with our freedom. We – and we alone – can prevent him from reigning over us and consequently obstructing his Lordship over our families, society and history. Because of Christ, many men and women successfully opposed the temptations of the world in order to live their faith truly, even to martyrdom... following their example, be the salt and light of Christ![4]

While I am comforted and challenged by the image of the Good Shepherd on my dresser, I try never to forget that I already know the questions for the definitive examination. We help each other ace it and I am deeply grateful for your help.

[4] Pope Benedict XVI, Homily in Benin, 20.XI.11.