

# Sunday Homily

## OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

22 NOVEMBER 2020

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

“Come, you whom my Father has blessed.”

### Illustration

At Monasterboice in County Louth, Ireland, an ancient Celtic cross depicts the story of the Last Judgement in graphic terms. Christ is weighing souls in a pair of scales. Those who are found worthy are seated on the right side of Christ with faces towards him, whilst those who are found unworthy are being prodded away by little devils with pitchforks, their faces aghast and facing away from Christ. The stone, which has survived the weather of more than ten centuries, was an early means of teaching the Gospel to a people who were illiterate. Only the monks and priests had access to handwritten texts of the Gospel. If the cross could speak of the people who had gathered there, name those who had prayed there, witness to the history written in the fields and villages, the history of Christian people in that place would be told.

The story told would be of the deeds and acts of love that were done without thinking, often unrecognised and unacknowledged. The heroes of the story would be the unknown of the history books: a woman who nursed a dying neighbour; a man who gave a stranger food and drink one cold November evening; perhaps a woman who hid a priest on the run for being a Catholic in penal times. These moments in history were sudden and quickly passed; but they are moments when the Gospel was lived out.

### Gospel Teaching

The Gospel highlights the paradox of the Christian life. Christ is met in the most unusual and unknown circumstances of life, often in the most unlikely and unexpected people. In a world in which style and presentation are very important in advertising, and images of rich and beautiful people abound, the Gospel reminds us of the *anawim*, “the poor”; those who can rely only on God because they have nothing and are considered by most others as nothing. They are the people whose history is not written in the history books and whose tombstones, if they could afford a tombstone, are the only reminders of their lives.

Perhaps it is difficult to reconcile the story of the Last Judgement with the mercy and love of God, which is often the focus of preaching today. The feast of Christ the King celebrates God’s love and justice. In the first reading, God is presented as a shepherd who cares for each of his sheep. The shepherd seeks each out, knows each by name, strengthens, heals and bandages the wounded. Christ the