

“Lives Well Spent” (Homily)

Deacon John Fulton, St. Kevin Roman Catholic Church, Warwick, Rhode Island
November 26, 2017 – The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
(Lectionary: 55; MT 25:31-46)

I get reflective this time of year. It’s a combination of things, I guess: the cool days, the long nights, the barren garden, acorns under foot—and Holy Mother Church. For Holy Mother Church, in this season of the waning year, gathers in her sheep from summer pastures, counts them, seeks the lost, tends them, heals the wounded. She prepares us to wear the purple and blue of Advent, calls us to reflect on our lives, asks us to look inward, to search hearts numbed by tragedy, and minds overwhelmed with trivia. She calls us to examine our actions (and inactions!) to account, and if necessary, to correct, before the great day of anticipation: the coming of the bridegroom, the return of the master, the descent of the Son of Man.

To aid us, Holy Mother Church prods us and guides us, her beloved sheep, with vivid Gospel images—many in the words of the Lord Jesus himself: images of lives well lived and lives squandered, images that prick the conscience, that reach out from the very pages of the Gospel, ensnaring our thoughts with stories that intermingle with our own, stories that beg the question: “What have WE done with God’s gift of life?” “How did WE spend our lives this year?”

And thus, we see our lives from new perspectives. Consider:

Our lives are **vineyards** leased from God. Did we pay the Landlord his due? Or, like those wicked tenants of old, did we keep all the harvest for ourselves?

Our lives are **invitations** to God’s banquet. Did we attend? Did we join Him at His table? At holy Mass? Or, like those wedding guests of old, did we seek other, more worldly pursuits?

Our lives are **purses**, full of coins. Did we pay God and Caesar their due? Or, like the Pharisees of old, did we promise much, but give little.

Our lives are **lighted lamps**. Did we tend our lamps well, enlightening the world? Or like those foolish virgins of old, did we let our lamps go out?

Our lives are **investments**: one talent, or five, or ten. Did we spend ourselves wisely, yielding dividends for God? Or, like that foolish servant of old, did we avoid challenges, fearing failure?

Our lives are **vocations**, to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. Did we know Him in the hungry? Did we love Him in the stranger? Did we serve Him in the sick? Or, like those wretches of old, did we pass Him by?

NOW is the time of accounting! The year is almost spent!

Reflect, turn back to God, and **spend your life well!**

Viva Christo Rey! — Long live Christ the King!

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,
and all the angels with him,
he will sit upon his glorious throne,
and all the nations will be assembled before him.
And he will separate them one from another,
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right,
'Come, you who 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 drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me,
naked and you clothed me,
ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him and say,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,
or thirsty and give you drink?
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,
or naked and clothe you?
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply,
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did
for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left,
'Depart from me, you accursed,
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 no drink,
a stranger and you gave me no welcome,
naked and you gave me no clothing,
ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Then they will answer and say,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty
or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,
and not minister to your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you,
what you did not do for one of these least ones,
you did not do for me.'

And these will go off to eternal punishment,
but the righteous to eternal life."