

King of the World

Intro. Today's gospel encourages us to see each other as people made in the image of God.

I. I used to feel bad for the goats in this image of the last judgment. What did *they* do wrong? So what if sheep are more cuddly! The sheep and goats are images used from people's everyday experience of the time. The Lord was good at connecting examples of daily life to his teaching. At night, shepherds divided the two kinds of animals for survival. Goats are more susceptible to cold nights and are brought into a shelter, whereas sheep are able to keep warm. The point isn't the sheep or goats; it's the process of judging those who inherit the kingdom prepared by the Father from those who do not. For the Lord, it is as simple as telling sheep from goats. For us, it may not be as easy. We have

gotten out of the habit of looking *at* each other; and rather, stare *past* one another. If we don't see each other, we cannot recognize the image of Christ present. We are about to enter a different time zone - Advent time - when we bring more focus on others as we prepare to celebrate birth of the Lord. In this time of added stress and anxiety, we can easily get things twisted up and too focused on ourselves. Fortunately, there are many opportunities presented by churches and community organizations to look around us and see sisters and brothers rather than strangers. Every year I am in awe of the amount of food this church and others give for the holidays. For Thanksgiving, our families have shopped for vegetables, cranberry sauce, stuffing mix and cards for turkey and ham. Our youth groups have sorted all the food into about thirty to thirty-five dinners.

Concl. Today's gospel reminds us to look closer at the people we meet every day. The Lord does not dress in disguises to trick us to see if we take care of our sisters and brothers or not. As we approach the thankful seasons, we might look close enough to see the Lord staring back at us from the face of the women and men we meet every day at the grocery store, the gas station or traffic intersection and respond by feeding, clothing and comforting our brothers and sisters. **Then we join the sheep invited by the Shepherd to enter the kingdom prepared for us by the Father. And add our names to those listed in the Eucharistic prayer.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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