

## **Feast of Christ the King : November 22, 2020**

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

A Reflection on the Gospel (*Matt 25:31-46*)

What if Jesus didn't really finish this story of the Last Judgment?

I heard this question posed on a podcast. What if it wasn't a blueprint for the end of time after all?

After all, Jesus only gave us one law: love one another. His whole ministry was helping people see they were not separate from the Source of their Being, that they were being held in Love. So why would the world end with such a radical judgment? Rather, consider Jesus as a wisdom teacher, not a lawgiver.

Try to reflect on this story not as a portend of future moral judgment but a *koan* – a text given by the master for study, reflection, and enlightenment.

If you can let your imagination go this far, an intriguing path opens. What if some of those on his right didn't simply do good deeds unaware as the Gospel notes? What if they had surrendered their will to the 'obedience of imitation' and took on the mind of Christ, seeing the Christ in everyone and everything around them?

If your imagination can make it this far, it may be ready for the logical conclusion of such a story told by a wisdom teacher. Jesus the Christ spent his life bridging the gaps of separation, shortening the distance between people, reaching out over the chasms of fear, hate, and selfishness. Jesus the Christ empowered people.

Then, if some of the ones on Christ's right were seeing with Christ's eyes and thinking with Christ's mind and acting with Christ's heart, they would not turn and march off to their private reward. They would do as Christ did and reach across the space to their brothers and sisters who are not yet seeing. They

would choose to stay with them on the outside until their closed-down, blind brothers and sisters could also see and until their hearts broke open.

Many spiritual paths know this transformed heart. Souls that reach divine union in Teresa's seventh mansion choose to stay on earth for the sake of others. Witness, too, the Lamed *vavniks* of mystical Judaism or the Bodhisattvas of Buddhism. These are the ones among us already offered entry into heaven who have chosen, nonetheless, to stay until all is enlightened, all is saved, all is sacred.

Many of us Christians seem to have made salvation a personal project, but the Christ knows nothing about that. And these bright and beautiful souls among us who sing with Christ's voice and shine with Christ's light are simply one with that Christ. They, too, are all about the salvation of the cosmos.

*Audrey Rogers*