

# Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – November 25/26, 2017 – Reflection

---

When you were little and you got on your mother's last nerve, did you ever hear those fateful and frightening words from her, "You just wait till your father gets home!?" The rest of the day was ruined as you sweated bullets anticipating with dread the hour of your judgment and doom!

When you were a teen and told your Dad you were going to study at a friend's house and you went to that friend's house not to study but for a party, do you remember what it felt like to come in the front door of your house and have your Dad ask how the studying went, only you were pretty sure that he knew somehow about the party and that you were gonna be grounded till you were thirty-five!!?

Have you ever stood in a courtroom before a judge awaiting sentence? I have ... and I can tell you, all your cockiness and ego disappear, and no matter what lawyers or others who've been in the same situation may tell you or how they'll try to reassure you that the sentence won't be imposed and you'll just get probation, you stand there uncertain of your fate, dreading the worst, pleading for leniency, promising God anything if He'll just swing that judge's heart to mercy!

I confess that since I haven't been in the situation lately, I don't spend much time worrying over my Last Judgment before Almighty God. But I hafta confess, that as I get older, as I lose relatives and friends from

my parents' and my generations; and as a priest, as I celebrate so many funerals of people I know and even of total strangers, I am confronted with my own mortality and I begin to worry over how God will judge me when I appear before Him after my earthly demise. And lemme tell you, I think I might have plenty to worry about!!

Ever since I was a little kid, I've been a sporadic and not too enthusiastic pray-er. I've been often a very selfish person who, no matter what happens, always looks at things in terms of how they'll wind up affecting me! I've been lazy and an expert procrastinator, never doing today what I could put off till tomorrow. I have marched to the direction of my own moral compass, worrying less about walking true north and more about walking in the way that makes me happy at any given moment. I've been fearful about standing up for what I know is right because I might lose some friends or popularity along the way. And, even though I know I need to make changes in my life, even though I promise and resolve, I still wait till tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. Yep, I think I think I might have something to worry about!!!

Yet still, I take comfort in the words of the prophet that I have heard proclaimed at so many of the Funeral Masses I have celebrated: "The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, His mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is His faithfulness." God, my judge, has unlimited patience for my antics; even when I am faithless, He is faithful; even when I love just me, He still finds something lovable in me! And, I believe that even if much of the time I can be a self-absorbed creep, the little things I may do for somebody else ... like paying a visit to somebody who's sick, or doing the grocery shopping for somebody who can't get out, or welcoming somebody to stay with me

when they have no real family, or fixing a meal for a neighbor that's mourning the loss of a loved one, or helping clean up after a big holiday feast, or giving a warm coat to somebody who might not be able to afford one, or helping out at the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry, or feeding ice chips to someone sick and in their last days, or giving to the Giving Tree ... Jesus tells me that even if I'm not a saint, if I do these little kindnesses for somebody else, I'm doing them for Him, to Him.

St. Peter, who knew a little something about failure and betrayal, shame and fear of judgment, wrote in a letter near the end of his life: "Above all, love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

So ... if I'm afraid that I'll be found wanting before my Lord and Judge, if I try to show a little love, a little kindness, a little generosity here to the people I see, God will take it that that little love, that little kindness, that little generosity is for Him.

Suddenly, I'm feelin' a little better about my chances when I appear before that Judge!!!!