

Longing for a Leader

This Week's Readings at Mass

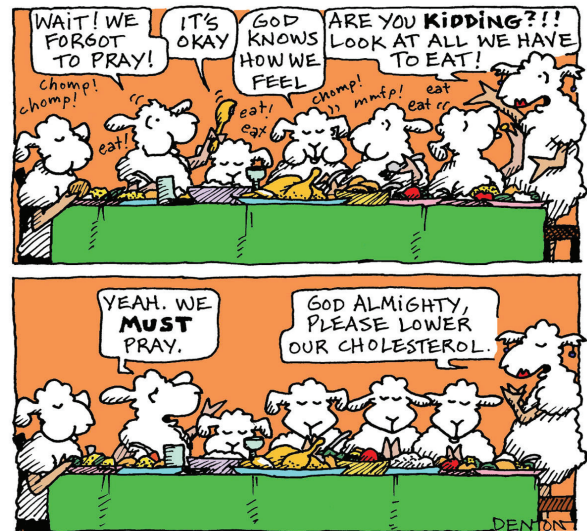
- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17 • The Lord as Shepherd
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28 • The last enemy to be destroyed
- Matthew 25:31-46 • The sheep and the goats

At the heart of the celebration of Christ the King (which always falls on the last Sunday of the year before Advent begins) is an understanding of Jesus as a king who was very different from the king whom the Jews expected would come to save them. They were awaiting a leader who would liberate their nation from their worldly oppressors. The modern-day equivalent for American Christians might be a longing for a leader to unify Republican, Democrats, and independents, a leader who can usher in understanding and peace between natives and immigrants, equality between men and women, reconciliation and unity between whites and people of color.

It is a mystery why Jesus didn't come to the Jews in the form they expected, nor does he come to us today making sweeping changes from the top down. Maybe there are times when we are disappointed and confused—like Jesus' contemporary Jews—because he didn't "fix" the world for them, and he won't "fix" it for us.

Instead of overriding humanity's free will, this king of ours shares the responsibility with *everyone* to create a just and loving world. Instead of wielding his power over people and expecting others to serve him, our king equates himself with the lowly: the hungry, naked, sick, and imprisoned, and he asks us to help *them*.

In our disappointment, we can choose *not* to follow Christ the King and wait for another leader, or we can stick



© Jean Denton flock.pastoralcenter.com

"Come you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

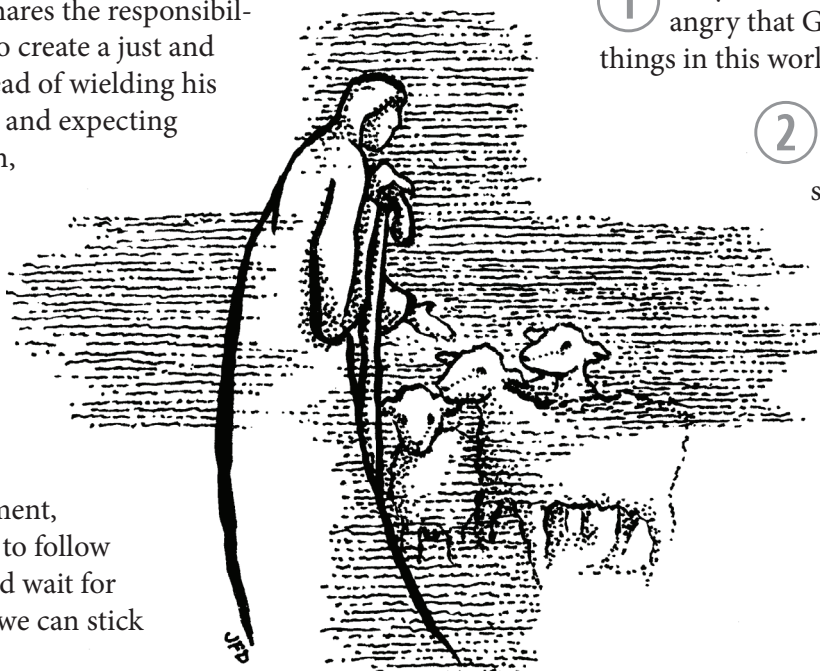
Sheepish Question:

God has given me so much! How can I share the abundance to show my gratitude?

with Jesus and get busy serving the least among us. We may never understand in this lifetime why Jesus works the way he does, but if we believe him and trust in him, we will want to serve him by serving others so that ultimately we can share in his Kingdom.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Do you ever feel disappointed or even angry that God doesn't come and fix things in this world? In what way?
- 2 How are you being invited to serve Jesus better by serving the least of your brothers and sister?



Word of the Week • Copyright © Ann Naffziger. Published by the Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com. All rights reserved.