



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday is “Meatfare Sunday” also called “Judgement Sunday”. This second name comes from the parable that is this Sunday’s Gospel reading. Our Lord teaches us that when He returns in all His glory, He will divide the world into the sheep, on His right, and the goats, on His left.

The sheep He will welcome into His Father’s Kingdom—for they gave Him shelter and greeted Him as a stranger; they offered Him food and drink; they clothed Him, visited Him in prison and nursed Him to health. To the goats on His left he will echo these things, which they did not do—and their reward, “...*the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*” (*Matthew 25:41*).

Both groups, the sheep and goats alike, will be astonished—when did they meet the King of All? The King shall respond that when they took in the least of their brothers and sisters—or if they saw suffering and passed it by—they have treated Christ in the same manner.

My brothers and sisters, consider that these choices play out in our world every day, and it seems now more than ever. Truly, when we are called to stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, we will be called to account for those things we did or did not do—and we will receive our reward accordingly.

However, we should not be motivated from fear of punishment, or cherishing the possibility of a reward. The genuine Christian should consider and strive to emulate the behavior would Christ have exhibited to others, to the poor and the least during His ministry. Though no human being can say for certain when our Lord shall come again, we read in the first book of the Bible that God says, “*Let us make man in our image...*” (*Genesis 1:26*) Our friends and family, our neighbors and even strangers that we have never met are all living icons of Christ. If we encounter a homeless person, and we avert our eyes every time, we must consider that we are intentionally avoiding all that is good in them; we are turning our backs on Christ.

This lesson on compassion, which will lead into Forgiveness Sunday before we begin Great Lent is not only preparation for the Fast, but ultimately preparation for the Glorious Resurrection. We will only be worthy to greet our Lord at His most triumphant, when we have willingly met Him in the brokenness of our brothers and sisters.

+ALEXIOS
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