

**Today I want to have an interactive homily. I would like you to join in the refrain of a song. I am sure you will recognize it and I will clue you when to join in, because I hate singing alone.**

**This past week I did some research and I found out some interesting facts about sheep and goats. It helped me to appreciate what Ezekiel was trying to get across to the people and the story that Jesus was telling his disciples about separating the sheep from the goats. It helped me to understand the culture of the time that Ezekiel and Jesus lived in.**

**I found out that sheep and goats are very different in how they live and in their importance to the community. Sheep were valuable for their wool, so valuable that they were rarely eaten. Also, the rams are known to protect their ewes from intruders.**

**Goats, on the other hand, do not protect their females and other than producing milk, their value is short lived. They were eaten quite regularly.**

**So then I thought to myself, what can give us value, so that Jesus would put us with the sheep on His right, the place of privilege?**

**St James makes it clear in his letter that Christian faith means little without works of mercy. He says, “My friends, what good is it for one of you to say that you have faith if your actions do not prove it? Can that faith save you? Suppose there are brothers or sisters, who need clothes and do not have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, -“God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!”–if you do not give them the necessities of life?”**

**Let's consider these examples:**

**The economy is bad for everyone, sure the gasoline prices are going down but many things remain high. Retirement income is shrinking because of the poor economy. Many people are either being let go from jobs or are forced to take on two low paying jobs just to make ends meet. Many are single parent families or elderly living on a fixed income.**

**One day last week, as I was in my office, someone stopped in to ask a question of me. This person said that they had a little extra money and wanted to know if there was a family they could adopt for Christmas. A call was made, information was exchanged, and a feeling of relief and gratitude was felt from a family in need. Christmas will be celebrated this year like it never was before.**

**(Sung) When I was weary you helped me find rest; when I was anxious, you calmed all my fears. Now enter into the home of my Father. Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me.**

**It was a cold snowy Sunday morning in Minnesota; the Green Bay Packers were in town to play the Vikings. Coach Sherman was sitting in the front seat of the first bus, staring intently out the windshield like he was in a trance when suddenly he gets up and comes off the bus and starts to walk down the street.**

**Players and staff alike wonder what is going on. Then when he is about a block away they see him knee down on the sidewalk. He seems to be looking at something on a vent that steam is coming out of. Soon they see the coach get up and open his coat to wrap around a person who was laying on the vent to stay warm. He brings the man inside the hotel.**

**Unknown to players and staff still waiting on the buses he tells the manager at the desk to put the man in the best room, give him the best food, let him get cleaned up and get him dry clothes. He also tells him to have the police bring the man to the stadium and escort him to the Packers bench by halftime. “Do not worry about the cost;” he tells the manager, “I will take care of it.” Without a word he then gets back on the bus and heads to the stadium. At halftime the players and staff notice they have a new assistant coach on the sidelines with them and recognized him as the man coach Sherman took into the hotel.**

**(Sung) When I was homeless you opened your door; When I was naked you gave me your coat. Now enter into the home of my Father. Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me.**

**The Spirit works in mysterious ways; I received a letter one day from a couple, who are parishioners here, who always seem to know when I need something, many times even before I need it. They said that they felt someone was in need and sent me a check to help them.**

**That evening I went on a Saint Vincent De Paul call to help a family who was in danger of being evicted from their home. After I was able to help them I found out that the next day was the father’s birthday. The dad said that they would just make some hot dogs on the grill and play some games. They had no extra money to even get a birthday cake for him.**

**I told them of my friends and that I thought they would want his family to celebrate his birthday with a good meal and a birthday cake. It was going to be the best birthday he ever had.**

**(Sung) When I was hungry, you gave me to eat; When I was thirsty you gave me to drink. Now enter into the home of my Father. Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me.**

**I think you get the picture. We learn from today's Gospel to look for Christ in everyone we meet. But the biggest lesson is not that we know who our brothers and sisters are, but what we do when we find them.**

**If you really take notice of the Gospel Jesus says nothing about first deciding whether they are deserving or not, nothing about their goodness, nothing about their morality. We are to seek Christ in them all. What good news this is for those of us on both the giving and receiving ends.**

**Such works of mercy are indeed signs of Christian charity and even common human decency. But they are more than this. As we learn from today's Gospel, performing these works of mercy are conditions for entry into the kingdom of heaven.**

**On this feast of Christ the King, we are called to rejoice that one day Jesus will come in glory. It is the "mystery of faith" we profess at Mass. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. We even proclaim that "we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ".**

**As we end this church year and begin the Advent season next Sunday be alert, for you never know when or where you will meet Christ in our everyday lives.**