THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Lust narrows the way we see. A person created in God's image can become an object in our imagination, and another person's dignity can disappear behind what we want from them. The Solemnity of Christ the King turns our attention back toward the truth. Sunday's gospel reveals the King through people whose needs are easy to overlook and whose dignity reflects His own.

Jesus describes the Son of Man separating the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats (Matthew 25:31–46). Those welcomed into the kingdom are surprised when He says, *"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink."* They ask when they ever saw Him. Jesus answers, *"Whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me"* (Matthew 25:35, 40).

Recovery from lust addiction changes more than behavior. It restores our capacity to see another person as someone who belongs to Christ rather than someone who exists for our use. That change reaches the imagination, where objectification begins before outward action. Chastity teaches us to look again and recognize the image of God where lust once saw only an opportunity for gratification or escape.

Before we learn to see others differently, Christ first looks upon us with mercy. In the first reading, God says, *"I myself will look after and tend my sheep"* (Ezekiel 34:11). Many of us entered recovery convinced that being fully known would lead to rejection. Instead, someone listened without disgust and helped us believe that freedom was possible. The dignity we received in that encounter becomes part of the dignity we learn to protect in others.

Step Ten keeps this work honest. Continuing to take personal inventory means noticing where lust has begun shaping the way we think about someone. It also asks us to admit promptly when secrecy or entitlement has returned. The inventory is not designed to produce shame. It helps us recognize distortion early enough to return to truth before a private thought becomes another hidden life.

Lust turns attention inward until another person's experience becomes secondary. Recovery opens us outward. We begin considering how our choices affect a spouse, family member, or anyone whose trust has been damaged. Accountability becomes less about avoiding consequences and more about becoming a person capable of honest relationships.

Mercy does not erase responsibility. Christ's care for us does not excuse harm, and receiving forgiveness does not eliminate the need for repair. Mercy gives us enough hope to face what we have done without collapsing into self-condemnation. It allows repentance to become action.

The gospel also gives service a deeper meaning. We may not encounter Christ only in dramatic acts of charity. We encounter Him when we listen to another person without turning the conversation back toward ourselves. We encounter Him when we welcome someone who is afraid to speak honestly in a recovery meeting. These ordinary acts train the heart away from consumption and toward communion.

Service remains healthy when it grows from humility. We are not called to rescue everyone or prove our worth through helping. We are called to become available to the person God places before us while continuing to protect our own recovery.

Christ the King has met us in the places we wanted to hide and restored the dignity that shame had tarnished. He continues meeting us in every person we are learning to see more truthfully. When recovery moves us from objectification toward reverence and from secrecy toward honest love, we are not merely avoiding lust but learning to recognize and serve our King.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where have you noticed lust narrowing the way you see yourself or another person?
- What Step Ten practice has helped you notice when your thinking is drifting from truth and respond before secrecy grows?
- How has serving or listening to another person strengthened your capacity for reverence and authentic love?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17
RESP. PS. Psalm 23:1–2, 2–3, 5–6
SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28
GOSPEL Matthew 25:31–46

© Catholic in Recovery, *meeting reflections for Sunday, 11/22/26*