

The Collects of Holy Week and Eastertide invite us to walk in Christ's steps

O BLESSED Saviour, who by thy cross and passion hast given life unto the world: Grant that we thy servants may be given grace to ***take up the cross and follow thee through life and death***; whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit we worship and glorify, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Collect of Holy Cross Day, p. 321*)

A LMIGHTY and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should ***follow the example of his great humility***: Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Holy Week, p. 150*)

G RANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, ***so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that, through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection***; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Easter Even, p. 180*)

A LMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also ***daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life***; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Collect of Easter 2, p. 191*)

FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS OF JESUS

LIVING A CHRIST-LIKE LIFE IN THE 21st CENTURY

- March 9* “Feasting on Scripture, Fasting from Fear”
- March 16* “Loving the Weak, Helping the Strong”
- March 23* “Carrying Crosses, Abandoning Burdens”
- March 30* “Walking like a Lamb, Roaring Like a Lion”
- April 6* “Standing on Earth, Looking to Heaven”

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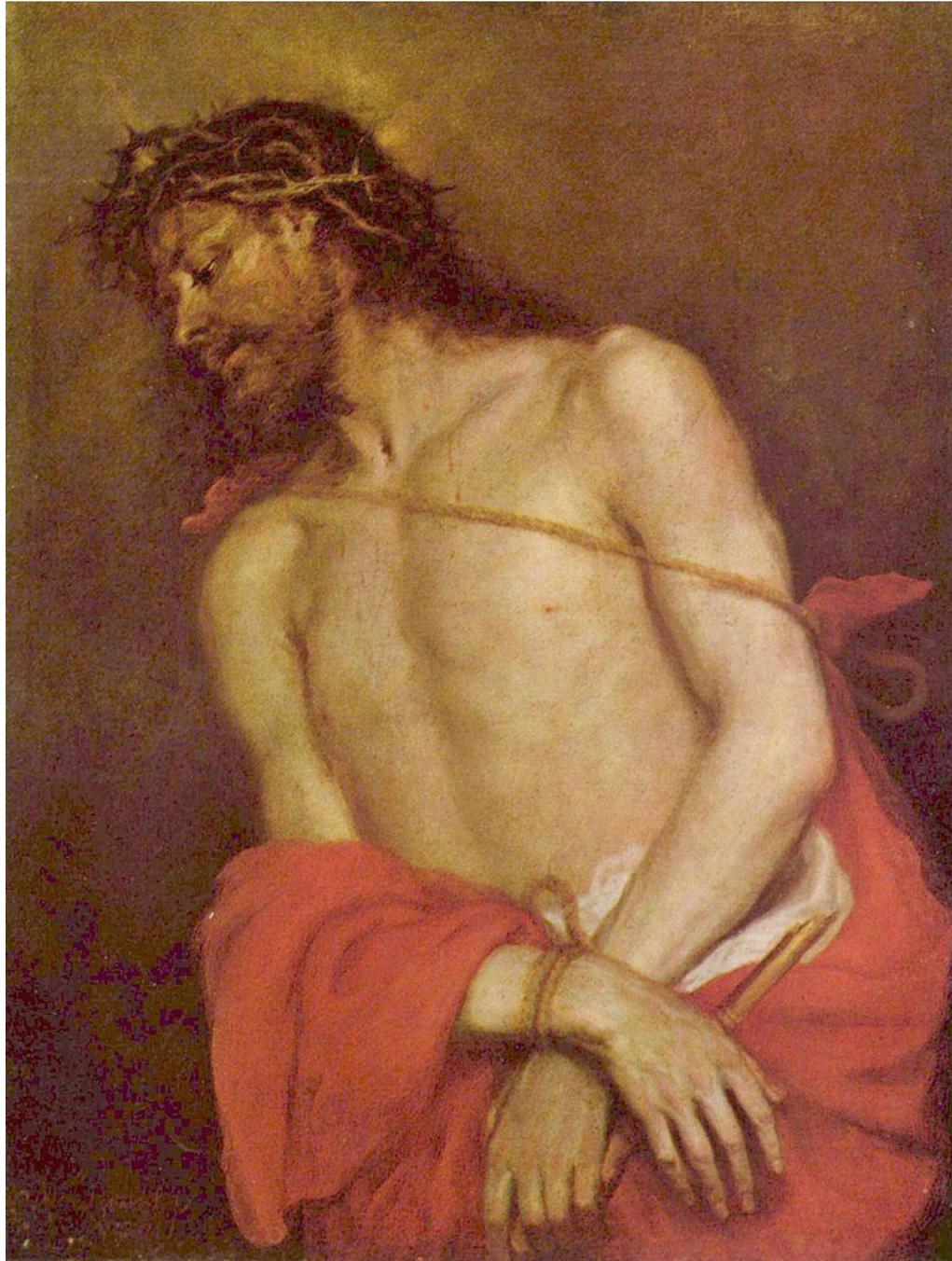
2022



Christ Crucified by Diego Velázquez (1599-1660)

The Cross, the central object of the Christian faith, is a symbol of weakness.

Matthew 26.1-5; Mark 14.1-2; Luke 22.1-2; John 11.45-57	Jesus is plotted against
Matthew 26.14-16; Mark 14.10-11; Luke 22.3-6; John 18.1-11	Jesus is betrayed by Judas
Matthew 26.36-46; Mark 14.32-42; Luke 22.40-46	Jesus' agony in the Garden
Matthew 26.47-56; Mark 14.43-52; Luke 22.47-53; John 18.1-11	Jesus is arrested
Matthew 26.57-66; Mark 14.53-64; Luke 22.54,67-71; John 18.12-14	Jesus is interrogated by the Caiaphas
Matthew 26.67-68; Mark 14.65; Luke 22.63-64	Jesus is mocked and spit upon
Matthew 26.69-75; Mark 14.66-72; Luke 22.55-62; John 18.15-18, 25-26	Jesus is denied by Peter
Matthew 27.11-14; Mark 15.2-5; Luke 23.2-16; John 18.28-32	Jesus is interrogated by Pilate
Matthew 27.15-23; Mark 15.6-14; Luke 23.17-24; John 18.38-40, 19.1-16	The crowd chooses Barabbas over Jesus
Matthew 27.24-26; Mark 15.15; Luke 23.25; John 19.16	Jesus is sentenced to death by crucifixion
Matthew 27.27-31; Mark 15.16-20; Luke 22.63-65; John 18.22, 19.1-16	Jesus is mocked, spit upon and struck
Matthew 27.32-44; Mark 15.22-32; Luke 23.33-43; John 19.17-27	Jesus endures the agony of crucifixion
Matthew 27.45-50; Mark 15.33-37; Luke 23.44-46; John 19.28-30	Jesus dies on the cross



Ecce Homo by Mateo Cerezo (1637-1666)

St. Paul tells us that God chose what is weak to reveal the strength of God. (Corinthians 1.25)

FOR the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and ***the weakness of God is stronger than men.*** For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But ***God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,*** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

St. Paul tells us that power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12.7-10)

TO keep me from becoming conceited ... a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for ***my power is made perfect in weakness.***” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

From the very beginning, Jesus' ministry was focused on lifting up the weak and bringing down the strong.

Mary's Song (Luke 1.46-55)

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

Hannah's Prayer (1 Samuel 2.1-10)

And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

The Incarnation was a journey from strength to weakness (Philippians 2.3-11)

DO nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus saw his ministry as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, specifically to lift up the weak and challenge the strong. (Luke 4:16-19)

WHEN he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME (*Isaiah 61.1*)
 BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME (*Isaiah 61.1*)
 TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR (*Isaiah 61.1*)
 HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES (*Isaiah 61.1*)
 AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND (*Isaiah 29.18; 35.5; 42.18*)
 TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE (*Isaiah 58.6*)
 TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOUR.’ (*Isaiah 61.2*)

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead was a main focus of his ministry.

Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:18-19	Jesus Heals a Great Multitude
Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16	Jesus Heals a Leper
Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10	Jesus Heals the Centurion's Paralyzed Servant
Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39	Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law
Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41	Jesus Heals a Crowd after the Sabbath's Sunset
Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:18-26	Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man
Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48	Jesus Heals a Woman of a Hemorrhage
Matthew 9:27-31	Jesus Heals Two Blind Men
Matthew 9:32-34	Jesus Heals a Mute Man
Matthew 9:35-38	Jesus Heals Individuals and Crowds in Various Cities
Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11	Jesus Heals a Man of a Withered Hand
Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56	Jesus Heals Crowds in the land of Gennesaret
Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37	Jesus Heals the Lame, Blind, Mute, Maimed
Matthew 19:1-2	Jesus Heals Great Multitudes in Judea
Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43	Jesus Heals Two Blind Men
Mark 8:22-26	Jesus Heals a Blind Man in Bethsaida
Luke 9:11	Jesus Heals Crowds Who Had Followed Him
Luke 14:1-6	Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy
Luke 17:11-19	Jesus Heals Ten Lepers
Luke 22:49-51	Jesus Heals His Enemy's Ear
John 4:46-54	Jesus Heals a Royal Official's Son in Capernaum
John 5:1-47	Jesus Heals Paralyzed Man at the Pool of Bethesda
John 9:1-41	Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind
Luke 13:10-17	Jesus Heals Woman with a Crippling Spirit of Infirmity
Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39	Jesus Heals a Demonized Man (Men)
Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 11:14-16	Jesus Heals a Blind Mute by Casting Out Demons
Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30	Jesus Casts a Demon Out of a Foreigner's Daughter
Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43	Jesus Casts a Demon Out of an Epileptic Boy
Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37	Jesus Casts a Demon Out of a Man in the Synagogue
Mark 1:39	Jesus Casts Demons Out of Many in the Synagogues
John 11:1-47	Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead
Mat 9:18-19, 23-26; Mk 5:21-24, 35-43; Lk 8:40-42, 49-56	Jesus Raises a Ruler's (Jarius) Daughter from the Dead
Luke 7:11-17	Jesus Raises Widow's Son from the Dead

Lifting up the lowly allowed others to recognize that Jesus was doing the works of God.

(Luke 7.18-23)

THE disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard:

THE BLIND RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT (*2 Kings 6.17; Isaiah 29.18; 35.5; 42.18*)

THE LAME WALK (*Isaiah 35.6*)

LEPERS ARE CLEANSED (*2 Kings 5.1-4*)

AND THE DEAF HEAR (*Isaiah 29.17; 35.5; 42.18*)

THE DEAD ARE RAISED UP (*1 Kings 17.17-24; Isaiah 26.19*)

THE POOR HAVE GOOD NEWS PREACHED TO THEM (*Isaiah 61.1*)

And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

(Matthew 15.29-31)

JESUS went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

Jesus' teaching often focused on lifting up the weak and bringing down the strong.

The Beatitudes and the Woes

Luke 6. 17-26

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."

Matthew 5.1-12

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

One of Jesus' favourite sayings ...

<i>Matthew 20.16</i>	"The last will be first, and the first will be last."	<i>The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard</i>
<i>Mark 9.35</i>	"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."	<i>The Disciples' Dispute about Greatness</i>
<i>Matthew 18.4</i>	"Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."	<i>The Disciples' Dispute about Greatness</i>
<i>Mark 10.31;</i> <i>Matthew 19.30</i>	"Many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."	<i>The Rich Young Man</i>
<i>Mark 10.44;</i> <i>Matthew 20.27</i>	"Whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all."	<i>Jesus and the Sons of Zebedee</i>
<i>Luke 13.30</i>	"Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."	<i>The Narrow Door</i>
<i>Luke 14.11</i>	"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."	<i>The Parable of the Wedding Feast</i>
<i>Luke 18.14</i>	"All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."	<i>The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector</i>
<i>Matthew 23.12</i>	"All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."	<i>Jesus Denounces the Scribes and Pharisees</i>

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-25)

JESUS said to them, “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house — for I have five brothers — so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Jesus invites us to rebalance the priorities of our own lives.

The Rich Young Man (Mark 10.17-31)

AS he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast (Luke 14.7-13)

NOW he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

When we serve the weak, we serve Christ.

The Final Judgement (Matthew 25.31-46)

JESUS said to them, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”