

# St Mary and St Peter's Church, Sunderland

Pontus Bramberg

Monday February 27 AD 2023

Today we continue our Lenten journey with a reflection on the 25th chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew, from the 31st verse until the end.

The evangelist's portrait of Our Lord in this text is quite fearsome, all the nations are gathered before the King of Kings and He separates them into two groups: the sheep, or the righteous, on His right, and the goats, or the unrighteous, on His left. At the end we are told that the righteous will be given eternal life but for the unrighteous eternal punishment is awaiting. The text tells us who are righteous: those who have demonstrated their faithfulness to the son of God through their acts of loving-kindness, particularly in concern for those whom Our Lord calls the least of His brethren: the poor and otherwise disadvantaged. During this season of Lent it is especially appropriate to have a think about our own conduct in this regard. Have we done what we can to alleviate suffering? Have we seen the Lord in our neighbour? These actions do not of themselves contribute to our salvation (we are saved by grace through faith) but works of loving-kindness towards our neighbour are a necessary consequence of the saving grace which is given to us through faith in the Gospel. The actions do not save us but they are a testament to that which does: grace through faith in the Gospel of Christ. The righteous see Christ in the least of His brethren and through their ministry to them they minister to Christ himself. This ministry is a testament to the faith which allows us to be heirs to the Kingdom of God.

Amen.