



**PASTORAL LETTER
OF
BISHOP ALAN HOPES**

**To be read at all Masses in the Diocese during the
weekend of November 25/26 2017**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This feast of Christ the King brings our Christian year to its end. Next Sunday, Advent Sunday, begins the new liturgical year, during which we will once again celebrate the saving events of the Lord's Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection which bring us pardon, peace and fullness of life.

Today, we lay all the joys and sorrows, consolations and sufferings that this year has brought at the feet of Jesus. Whatever we have been through this past year, Christ is the King of it all and in the fullness of time will restore all things and present them to his Father in heaven.

How important it is for us to remember that Jesus Christ is not just our friend and brother – he is also our King. Yes, He listens to us, walks with us, and shares our life. But at the end of our lives, he will also ask us to give an account of ourselves when he will judge us with mercy and with love.

Today's Gospel, the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, teaches us that our King's mercy on that day will be shown to us in the measure we have shown our love for others, the same love that he has first shared with us. We are called especially to show our love to those in need, the sick, those in prison, the hungry and homeless, and all on the margins of our society. Only then can we hope to be shown the loving mercy of our eternal King.

Today is also Youth Sunday. We give thanks for the presence of so many young people and young adults in the Church and for the contribution they make to the life of our parishes. I want to thank you all for the enthusiasm and the many gifts you bring with you to the mission of the Church.

Today I also want to thank the Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry and for the members of the Ignite Mission Team for all that they are doing to assist our parishes and schools to help our young people to grow in the understanding and practice of their faith – and to enjoy it!

I would also like to thank all parents, priests, deacons, religious and catechists and our schools for the many ways in which you are handing on the faith to the upcoming generation and all that you do to encourage and empower our young people in the ways of faith. It is a huge privilege and at the same time an immense responsibility!

I hope that some of you were able to watch the recent documentary about the five young women who spent time with the nuns of the Sacred Heart Convent in Swaffham. Those young women had settled for giving their lives away to what Pope Francis has called a *throw away culture*, a culture where possessions and money and thrills are at the centre and purpose of life.

In the Convent, they discovered something infinitely more attractive - the love that the Sisters had in giving their lives to Christ the King and all that that meant in their everyday lives of serving others. Their day to day joy showed their guests that the Kingship of Christ is a firm foundation on which young people can build their hopes and place their life's ambitions.

