

Commentary for the Solemnity of Christ The King.



Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. This is the Last Sunday of the Church Year. Through this feast the church is saying that all of our celebrations can be summed up in one statement: "Jesus is our King,". We serve him.

The end of the Church year, the end of time, the last judgment, the solemnity of Christ the King--all these themes fit together as we meditate on the gospel. Christ sits enthroned as King of Kings. He judges each of us. Dante would put it this way, "We are judged on our capacity for Love." Today's Gospel confronts us with the fact that if we haven't shared his love with others, we cannot be exposed to the fullness of Christ's love in heaven.

It is interesting that not only the goats, the people who don't help others, but even the sheep, those who do help others, say that they don't remember seeing the Lord. That's understandable. Christ is present in every aspect of our lives. Only we might not recognize him. He is still there. Yes, He is present in Church, in Scripture and the Eucharist. But He is also present in the poor and the poorest of the poor, as Blessed Mother Theresa would refer to the suffering homeless. He is present in the children dying in Somalia. He is present in the young man dying of AIDS.

Yes, he is present in your family as you pray together at home before meals or at bedtime. But he is also present in your wife or your husband when he or she has had a bad day and needs your support. He is present in your children when their needs drain you. The infant you get up at 3 am to nurse is

Christ. The toddler getting into everything and making a mess quicker than you can clean up after him or her is Christ. The child not understanding mathematics is Christ. The teenager needing both wings and protection is Christ, and the young adult you are putting through college is Christ.

Christ is present in those people we meet who are prayerful, spiritual, and charismatic. But He is also present in those who may not even recognize His presence in their lives. He is present in those mocked by our society. When we greet someone who is a bit eccentric and who everyone else treats poorly, we are greeting Christ. When we give help to a family struggling to make ends meet, we are helping Christ.

Perhaps, the foremost authority on today's gospel was Blessed Mother Theresa. Her comment on the gospel was that at the end of our lives we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by "I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in. Blessed Mother Theresa went on to say, "Hungry, not only for bread, but hungry for love; naked not only for clothing, but for human dignity and respect; homeless not only for want of a room of bricks, but homeless because of rejection. This is Christ in distressing disguise."

In many ways this is a disturbing gospel. We are troubled by a gospel that tells us that we are accountable not just for the things we do that are wrong, but also for the things we fail to do. We are troubled because we cannot get away with relegating our following of Christ into the compartments and slots of our life marked "religion". The gospel tells us that is simply insufficient. To profess ourselves as Christian demands that we make a clear and conscious decision to integrate Christ into every thread and fiber of the fabric of our lives. There can never be a time or a situation that we refuse to recognize his presence in others.

This is the Solemnity of Christ the King. At the conclusion of the Church year we are asked what the Christ event means in our lives. We are asked about our world view. Do we view others as those loved by Christ, as those who Christ is present in, or are we so tied up in ourselves that we rarely integrate our living of the Christian life with our profession of Christianity?

We conclude the Church year by asking the Lord to help us serve the Kings of Kings as He presents Himself in those reaching out to us.

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