

Christ the King

Luke 23:35-43

Jesus was greeted as king on his entry into Jerusalem in Luke's gospel. Pilate asked him whether he was king of the Jews when he was brought for trial and over the cross was written the inscription, "This is the king of the Jews." The only person to take this title seriously, was *the good thief* when he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his Kingdom.

Norma Pimentel, a sister with the Missionaries of Jesus from the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, writes, "I saw a video recently about a bling man who is sitting near the steps in front of a building with a sign that says, "I'm blind, Please help." *People pass by and don't seem to notice him.* They just walk on by as they continue on their route. One morning a woman passes by and then returns. She looks at the man, picks up the sign, and writes a message on the other side.

Amazingly, after she walks away almost everybody stops and gives this man some coins, some money. On her way back, perhaps after work, the woman stops and looks at the man. He senses that it is the person who wrote on his sign that morning. He asks her, "What did you write on my sign?" And she says, "I wrote the same thing, but with different words." What she wrote was, "It's a beautiful day and I can't see it." It's a beautiful day and I can't see it!

Sister Norma writes that it is amazing how our attitude, our response, changes when we see people with different eyes. Just like the blind man, there are many others in our world, in our society, in our community who really don't have the opportunity to truly experience the beauty of life.

The Solemnity of Christ the King invites us to bring Jesus into our lives, to live out our faith. "How can we do this?" she writes. "By responding to Jesus's invitation to find him in the people who we see who need our help. We find him in the blind man but also in the immigrant, or the poor, or people who are in distress. We are invited on this day and every day to live out our faith, to make a difference in the lives of others.

Taking a different approach from *Give Us This Day* in Michael Sanem's reflection, he writes, "At the crucifixion, beyond a small group of ever-loyal women and one apostle, the only one who recognizes Jesus as savior is a criminal, most likely a murderer. In death as in life, the kingship of Christ – what he called the Kingdom of God – is often overlooked, and very often mocked, by those with power.

This reality continues to this day. We can **guild** images of Jesus in **gold**, we can proclaim his Kingship from the pulpit. But until we see the face of our King in the least of our sisters and brothers – until we recognize the crucified Christ in the broken, abused, and suffering people in our family, our Church, and our world – we remain a long way from his Kingdom."

Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, before he became **Pope Francis**, had a handwritten four-point reflection on the type of pope the Church would need. It described a pope who would help the Church remember her true identity: to be a Church "called to come out from itself and to go to the peripheries." He warned that if the Church does not do this, to evangelize, it becomes self-referential and gets sick," and "...no longer glorifies Christ but seeks to glorify itself, (and)...that lives in itself, of itself, for itself." This is in Fr. James Mallon's book, ***Divine Renovation: Bringing your parish from maintenance to mission***. Surprisingly, the book was suggested for reading to the priests of this archdiocese for the Beacon of Light.

At the *World Youth Day* in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis told the youth, "I would like to say something...I want you (the youth), to go out! I want the Church to go out into the streets! I want us to defend ourselves against everything that is worldliness, that is institutional, that is comfortableness, that is clericalism, that is being shut-in on ourselves. The parishes, the schools, the institutions, exist **to go out!** If they don't go out, they become **NGOs**."

"It's a beautiful faith, but I can't feel it." Only we can put flesh on the words of Christ once we feel his presence within ourselves. And that takes prayer and action with others and through others. Our parish is wonderfully endowed with programs that reach out beyond our parish borders to the hunger, the sick, the imprisoned, to those who need a bath and fresh clothes and the ignorant. Faith can be taught in our schools from books, and even reading the bible, but only we can pass it on. "It's a beautiful faith, but I can't feel it!"