

HOMILY ~ OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE NOVEMBER 25-26, 2023

All Hail to Christ Our King!

Our Lord Jesus was heralded as the Newborn King in the Incarnation, in the line of the Great King David, and was adored by Magi from the East. He was also feared as a threat by King Herod, who tried to have Him killed. When He was preaching, He spoke of a Kingdom that was at hand and in our midst if we dare follow His ways. In the *Our Father* that He taught to His disciples, He speaks of a Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven! At His trial before His Crucifixion, He says that His Kingdom is not of this world, but of the Kingdom of Heaven. And today, on this Feast, we claim Jesus Christ as Our King and King of the Universe!

But is Jesus like other Kings that we have heard about in history or even see today in some parts of the world? No, not really. He is not a controlling and domineering political figure, nor even a benevolent dictator. Our King is a Shepherd and a Servant Leader. How can this be? Is He really a King if He tells us that He has come not to be served but to serve? If He washes the feet of His disciples, the role of a servant? If He cares for us like a Good Shepherd cares for His sheep, and He is willing to leave the 99 to find the one who has gone astray? Does this sound like a high and mighty King – a judge who sits on His royal throne that we need to fear? No, it doesn't, and Thanks Be to God that Our King is a Good Shepherd and a Servant Leader!

Our Gospel puts it quite simply: We will be judged by how we treat others, by how much we care for the least of our brothers and sisters, by how closely we follow the example of Jesus our Good Shepherd and Servant Leader! This is Christ Our King!

And how is Christ to be the King of our lives? Instead of attempting to control others, we might do better serving them and praying for them like the Good Shepherd! We might wash the feet of others – a sign of welcome and hospitality. We might heal the sick, bind up their injuries, and welcome back those who have gone astray. We might feed the hungry, clothe the poor, care for the sick, visit the prisoner, welcome the stranger, and give water to those who thirst, not only for clean water, but for justice.

The lesson here is that we should never let the world convince us that small acts of sacrifice, acts of service and kindness aren't of importance. Indeed, they are! And Jesus Christ Our King reminds us: As often as you do these things for the least little ones, so you do it for Me! In doing these small and seemingly insignificant acts, we help build the Kingdom of God on Earth!

I was driving home from a work when my car started to choke and sputter and died.

I barely managed to coast, cruising, into a gas station, glad only that I would not be blocking traffic on the highway and would have a somewhat warm spot to wait for the tow truck. It wouldn't even turn over. Before I could make the call, I saw a woman walking out of the "quickie mart" building, and it

looked like she slipped on some ice and fell into a gas pump! So I got out to see if she was okay. When I got there, it looked more like she had been overcome by sobs than that she had fallen. She was a young woman who looked really haggard with dark circles under her eyes. She dropped something as I helped her up, and I picked it up to give it to her. It was a nickel.

At that moment, everything came into focus for me: the crying woman, the ancient Suburban crammed full of stuff with 3 kids in the back (1 in a car seat), and the gas pump reading \$4.95. I asked her if she was okay and if she needed help, and she just kept saying "I don't want my kids to see me crying," so we stood on the other side of the pump from her car. She said she was driving to California and that things were very hard for her right now.

So, I asked, "And you were praying?" That made her back away from me a little, but I assured her I was not a crazy person and said, "He heard you, and He sent me."

I took out my card and swiped it through the card reader on the pump so she could fill up her car completely, and while it was fueling, walked to the next door McDonald's and bought 2 big bags of food, some gift certificates for more, and a big cup of coffee. She gave the food to the kids in the car who attacked it like wolves, and we stood by the pump eating fries and talking a little.

She told me her name and that she lived nearby. Her boyfriend left 2 months ago, and she had not been able to make ends meet. She knew she wouldn't have money to pay the rent January 1st, and finally, in desperation, had called her parents, with whom she had not spoken in about 5 years. They lived in California and said she could come live with them and try to get on her feet there.

So she packed up everything she owned in the car. She told the kids they were going to California for Christmas but not that they were going to live there.

I gave her my gloves and a little hug and said a quick prayer with her for safety on the road. As I was walking over to my car, she said, "So, are you like an angel or something?"

This definitely made me cry. I said, ***"My dear, at this time of year, angels are really busy, so sometimes God uses regular people."***

It was so incredible to be a part of someone else's miracle. And of course, when I got in my car, it started right away and got me home with no problem. I'll put it in the shop tomorrow for a check, but I suspect the mechanic won't find anything wrong.

So today, let us remember Christ Our King Who is the Good Shepherd and our Servant Leader. Let us remember that the Last Judgment is one where we will be judged by how well we chose to Live the Golden Rule. Let's live this Advent by doing Acts of Kindness and celebrate Jesus Christ, The King of the Universe!

Peace,
Deacon Don