



The Feast of Christ the King (Year A)



Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Son of Man comes in glory, and all the Angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

“Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’

“Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

“Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

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Reflection:

Christ is King, but what does his kingdom look like? This final parable in Matthew’s Gospel gives us a clear indication of what is most important to God. You can tell a lot about a particular country or city by the way they look after those who have a hard time looking after themselves. Take a moment to reflect on your attitudes towards those who may seem weaker or less able than you. This feast is a wonderful time to take notice of those needs in others that may have gone unmet.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):



If you were given the opportunity to be King/Queen, what would your kingdom/country look like?



St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa): (Bedtime Story)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teQb8eubFzg> If you would like to watch a video of her story.

If you would have asked Mother Teresa, “What does Jesus’ Kingdom look like?” She would have pointed to the many people serving the “poorest of the poor” in cities and towns around the world for the purpose of making God’s love known

Born Agnes Bojaxhiu, Teresa wanted to become a teacher. Hoping to teach in some “far off country” she joined the Loreto Sisters and was sent to Ireland for training.

While in training, Agnes fell in love with the story of St. Therese of Lisieux and changed her name to Teresa. After her training she was sent to India to teach in a Catholic Girl’s School.

Teresa taught for almost twenty years in India. One day, on seeing the terrible conditions of the many people living on the streets of Calcutta, Teresa felt a deep need to help them. After taking some time to pray on it, she received permission from her superiors to take a year’s leave from the school to work with the poor.

At first, she was a stranger among strangers. Homeless, with no money of her own, Teresa had to beg for even the smallest of things. If it was not for the help of some of the people she wanted to help, she would not have had a place to sleep or food to keep her going.

There were times that Teresa wanted to return to her work as a teacher and the comforts she left behind. Back at school she would have a comfortable bed, three warm meals and a roof above her head. Now that she was on the street, all these things were much harder to come by.

It also took a while for the street people to trust Teresa. After all, they were used to a lot of outsiders who treated them badly. “Why was this lady doing these kind things for them?”, they thought. It took them quite some time to accept her love and kindly deeds.

Teresa struggled on. After a couple of years, a few of Teresa’s former students began to join her and they formed a little community of their own. They called themselves, “Missionaries of Charity”, and they took care of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the sick and all those who were not cared for by others. “To show love for the poor,” became their goal.

To help her work, Teresa was given permission to use an empty building to take care of those who were dying. Later, a second and third building were needed to meet the increased need and the increased number of volunteers who came to help her. By now, people called her “Mother”, and the world began to hear of the great works of “Mother Teresa”.

Mother Teresa's love for the poor became so well known that, after thirty years of serving the poorest people in our world, Mother Teresa was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. By now, her community of Sisters were working all over the world. They lived in simple houses, often had only two or three pieces of clothing and rejected any comforts like sofas, televisions, dishwashers and even beds. They slept on simple mattresses and sat on wooden chairs.

The money Mother Teresa received, on winning the Nobel Peace Prize, was given to the poor; so were the millions of dollars that people began to donate to her many projects. When asked to talk about herself, she would often turn the focus to the poor. After all, God's kingdom is not found in beautiful clothing, fine foods and great luxury, but in the way we treat one another, especially the poor.



Parenting Corner:

With Christmas only one month away, it might be good to plan a family activity focused on the needs of others. Just as it is good to help your child(ren) identify the spiritual gifts that need to be nurtured in their lives (last week's suggested activity), it is equally good for children to be involved in putting their love and gifts in action.

The Corporal Works of Mercy:

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Clothe the naked.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Visit the sick.
- Visit the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy:

- Help those who struggle with faith.
- Teach those who do not know.
- Speak out against sin.
- Comfort those who are suffering.
- Forgive wrongs done to you.
- Be patient with other people's failings.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

The Corporal Works of Mercy in Action:

- Go through your pantry together and prepare a basket of food and drink for the foodbank. This might be more meaningful if your child has a chance to pay for part of the cost, use the God money from a few weeks ago or contribute their help in some other way.
- Go through a closet together and donate some of the newer, but seldom worn, clothing to a thrift store or a family with younger children (Donations of clothes need to be in good condition).
- Support a food bank or woman/emergency shelter in some way.
- Visit a sick or elderly person (some elderly people are almost prisoners in their own home or institution) or prepare a card or care package for them.
- Visit a cemetery (especially when you have loved ones buried there) and pray for them. You can also prepare yourself by creating something simple that can be left at the gravesite.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy in Action:

- Visit someone who might be struggling in some way and show them some love.
- Take some time to teach a younger sibling a prayer (this could be done through an art activity).
- Prepare a poster that discourages a bad action (littering, abuse of animals, violence, etc.) and arrange to display it in an appropriate place.
- Take some time to reflect on past hurts that are still remembered. This is especially good if you know that your child needs help in dealing with a recent hurt that still haunts them. Pray that God may give you the ability to forgive. (This could also be a good journaling or art activity).
- In the case where the death of a loved one is present, take some time to pray to God for them in prayer together.

These are only suggestions to get you started. You may better ideas of your own. Please focus on the one activity that you can all agree on. Re-interpret it according to your circumstances.

The People Ask for a King (based on 1 Samuel 8): (Bedtime Story)

The people came to Samuel. They wanted a king. "We want a king," they told him, "like all the other countries around us. Someone to lead us into battle; someone we can turn to when we are in need."

"God is your king," Samuel answered. "He has done all these things for you, and more. He has always provided a leader whenever you need one and has looked after each one of your needs."

But the people did not listen; they wanted a king.

So, Samuel turned to God in prayer. "What shall I do?" He asked God. "The people are asking for a king; they no longer trust that you will look after them."

"Give them a king," God answered, "for only then will they learn how good things were while I was leading them and how poor things will be under anyone else."

On the next day, Samuel addressed the people, "Yesterday you asked me to give you a king to rule over you, someone to lead you into battle and turn to when you are in need. Today I am ready to give you a king but, before I do so, I need to warn you what a king will do.

"In order to fight your battles he will take your children to fight in his army and he will take your money to pay for it all. The king will take your best fields to feed his army and take your best horses to go to war.

"In order to satisfy himself he will take your best daughters to serve him in all of his needs. He will ask you to pay for his castles, his crown and his rich food and fine clothes.

"As king he will not listen to your advice or do what you would like him to do.

"There will, indeed, come a day when you look at your king and your role as his servants and wonder if you had not made a mistake."

But the people did not listen to Samuel and were too stubborn to change their minds. They wanted a king, and a king they would get. They were not interested in anything else.

That day, God gave his people their very first king, a man big and strong for battle. King Saul was his name, fighting battles was his game. The people rejoiced on that day.

Samuel's words did come true many years later, when the king became more of a burden. Instead of serving his people, the king wanted to be served. Instead of helping them in their need, the king was more concerned about his needs.

Take a moment to reflect on why you would like to be "King/Queen for a Day", or maybe for much longer. Ask yourself: "Do I see it as a role of service?" or "Am I looking to be served?"

Then think about what Jesus' kingdom looks like, as each is called to serve their neighbours need, and where, the king himself, willingly dies for his people.