

HOMILY for JESUS CHRIST THE KING – Year C

This Sunday celebrates the Feast of Christ the King. As I think about the topic of “the king,” I’m reminded of this cute story of a lion that I’d like to share with you.

An antelope & a lion entered a diner & took a booth near the window. When the waiter approached, the antelope said, “I’ll have a bowl of hay & a side order of radishes.”

“And what will your friend have?”

“Nothing,” replied the antelope.

The waiter persisted. “Isn’t he hungry?”

“Hey, if he were hungry,” said the antelope, “would I be sitting here?”

I don’t think Jesus Christ the King would eat us like the lion king... Anyway, on this last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church calls us to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. This feast reminds us that Christ should be our King throughout the year – from the beginning to the end of the year. We should have counted on Christ to be our one & only leader this past year to guide us & protect us. If you have not done it yet, this weekend is the right time for you to make that commitment & pick Christ to be your leader. Or, if you have pledged your allegiance to a human leader, this weekend is the time for you to switch to Christ as your one & only leader. For all human leaders will disappoint us & let us down one way or another. But, Christ will never do that to us. Instead, He will always put our well-being before His & be ready to fulfill our hopes & dreams. That’s why it would be our honor & security to have Christ as our one & only leader. We’ll explore in this homily on why that is the best decision we have ever made.

People sometimes pick their leaders because they are eloquent speakers, or they might possess certain charisma, or they are super rich. But, we all know that those are not the right qualities to make someone a good leader. Those qualities might make a person look good to the public, but they sure do not make someone a good leader. Instead, they might turn a person into a dictator as our human history has often shown us. Ironically, those dictators have destroyed & hurt everyone, including the people who have got them there, once they have climbed to the pinnacle of their power. To avoid that mistake, the Bible has suggested a list of qualities that would bring us a good leader. The qualities that the Bible believes a good leader should have are integrity, honesty, humility, wisdom, patience, caring, & compassion. Those qualities will help a good leader focus on the common good & work hard for the community. Those qualities will keep a good leader on a straight & narrow path & prevent him from going down the wrong way. Those qualities will make a good leader put the benefits of others before his own & avoid acts of corruption & destruction. Those qualities will inspire a good leader to unite the community & do more good things for it.

We Christians might not see any civic leader who possesses those good qualities. But, we have found them in Jesus Christ. He is full of integrity, honesty, humility, wisdom, patience, caring, & compassion. But, He is more than all the good qualities put together. In fact, what makes Jesus an extraordinary leader is His willingness to make great personal sacrifices for His community, including the offering His own life on the Cross for us all. This Sunday’s Gospel shares with us the story of how Jesus ended up on the Cross & what He said on His last breath. It reads, “The people stood there watching, & the leaders kept jeering at Jesus, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Messiah of God, the chosen one.’ The soldiers

also made fun of Him, coming forward to offer Him sour wine & saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself...' [One of the criminals] said, 'Jesus, remember me when you enter your Kingdom.' And Jesus replied, 'I assure you: this day you will be with me in Paradise.'" I don't think we can find any leader who would have the humility & compassion like that. Only Jesus who would be willing to endure all the jeering & sufferings for the salvation of the world could forgive a criminal & promise him a place in paradise with Him. For that is what an extraordinary leader would do. He would try to save not only the whole world but also look for the lost sheep. He is indeed a good shepherd. We would never find a leader like Jesus. We would be blessed & honored to have a leader like Him.

However, there is one more blessing that this extraordinary leader/Jesus would bring us. St. Paul reveals that blessing in this Sunday's Second Reading as following, "... He [God] rescued us from the power of darkness & brought us into the Kingdom of His [God's] beloved son. Through Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures. In Him, everything in Heaven & on earth was created, things visible & invisible... All were created through Him, & for Him." So, St. Paul believes that Jesus is the image of invisible God, whom we have wished to see from the beginning of Creation. By seeing Jesus, we now have a glimpse of God the Father. That is the privilege that only the deceased would be able to experience after this life. Jesus allowed us to have that Heavenly experience right here in this life. How awesome would an extraordinary leader like Jesus have done for us!

My dear brothers & sisters, many people like to claim that they would be a good leader & represent us well. Unfortunately, most of them do not possess the leadership qualities mentioned above, nor live up to their positions. They only want the leadership position for their own benefits, instead of their communities. Of course, there is nothing worse for us than following a bad leader. So, let me recommend you a leader whom you can trust & count on in this life & the next. He is Jesus Christ. He will do anything to protect our benefits & help us in times of need. He will never disappoint us or mislead us in any way. Instead, He has already sacrificed His own life on the Cross for our salvation & eternal life. Who else would we want to lead us other than Jesus Christ?