

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
11/26/17

As far as I can tell, the official name of this great feast changed in 2012. For a long time, it was simply Christ the King. Then it changed to Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. Now it's called Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe. Perhaps you think I'm just being picky. But let me explain. You see, when I think of a king of the universe, I think of Ming. And if you don't know who he is, look up Flash Gordon and Ming on the internet.

I could summarize today's Gospel parable in one sentence: the choices we make create our future. Let me repeat that: the choices we make create our future. We all know that intuitively, but do we really understand it? Do we live our lives each and every day with that in mind? What do the choices we make say to those around us?

Jesus says that whatever we do for the least of His, we do for Him. That's a pretty scary proposition. Some people in Africa exemplify this concept with something called Ubuntu.

A group of children were told that the first child to win a race to a basket of fruit would get all the fruit. All of them joined hands and ran together. Asked why, they answered: "Ubuntu. How can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?" We could take that to the next level and ask ourselves how one of us can be satisfied while so many of our brothers and sisters have nothing?

Sr. Dianne Bergant calls to mind seeing the old bumper sticker that challenges us to commit random acts of kindness, which to her is good advice in light of today's Gospel. She reminds us there was no mention of the sins we usually worry about as the basis for the last judgment. Which is not to say such things don't matter.

But she says the emphasis here has to do with getting out there and responding to people who are really in need, those who have lost their basic necessities. You see, Jesus has not disappeared – He's

hiding among the hungry, thirsty, naked, lost, sick, imprisoned, alien and persecuted of the world. He's hiding in the least of our brothers and sisters. Bergant concludes by suggesting we should pick an area that will help us be counted among the sheep: food distribution, environmental concerns, immigration reform, clothing. The list goes on and on.

So, where do we begin? How do we tackle the world's problems? One author suggests focusing on three words. The first is awareness; being aware of the cries for help, aware of the person who looks away, aware of the sadness in a friend's eyes. The second word is generosity. When we allow the word generosity to sit with us in our souls, we discover a reality in which no one has ever been critical. For example, the question, "May I offer you more of my time?", is rarely met with a negative response.

Lastly we should embrace the word joy which the author reminds us is wrapped up in our giving to Jesus as He has given to us. When we find Him in the hungry and thirsty and so on, we discover a joy that has no boundaries. Awareness, generosity, joy.

I received an email from a college buddy this past week and it sums up today's celebration quite well. It's called *The Fifth Set* and it should come as no surprise that it's compares life to a tennis match. It's pretty long so I won't share the whole thing with you. But the last sentence is perhaps the best. It goes like this. Today is the oldest you've ever been; yet the youngest you'll ever be. So enjoy this day while it lasts. It's only 24 hours long but each hour is as important as the one before it. Which is why the choices we make create our future.