

Chaplain's Bulletin November 20, 2022



Dear Folks,

Today we celebrate Christ the King. In our Gospel today (Luke 23: 35-43), we see Jesus portrayed as King, but appearing as unkingly as it is possible to appear. This is the great paradox of Christianity, that the greatest of all victories was won by what looked like the greatest of all defeats. This defies the wisdom of the world and turns it on its head. “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18, though I encourage you to read the whole chapter).”

In the Second letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul is dealing with a challenge. He had taught the Gospel to the Corinthians, but then some others came and claimed to be better apostles with a better Gospel. They called St. Paul weak, and unworthy of following. They boasted about how wonderful they were by comparison. St. Paul said he could boast too, and then talked about being imprisoned, flogged, shipwrecked, and similar things that were normally not cause for boasting. He accomplished great things because he was willing to be a suffering servant.

This is not possible without a close relationship with God. Christianity does not work as a project, as a set of beliefs and tasks. It is a love relationship, or it is not Christianity. Our Scribe and Pharisee friends tried to make it a project, a set of beliefs and tasks, but their hearts remained closed.

“Although if I should wish to boast, I would not be foolish, for I would be telling the truth. But I refrain, so that on one may think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me because of the abundance of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’ I would rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell within me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:6 -10).”

By the way, I'm very unhappy with the passing of Proposal 3. I've talked to a number of people who are also unhappy and would like to do something about it. We all can recognize that what we have been doing hasn't been getting us where we need to go. I've connected with a few people on a project to shift the culture. The first step will be to pray (of course!), and I don't mean saying a quickie prayer and getting to business, but serious time with God. Then we can talk about action, and I suggest that we work messages that promote empathy for unborn children. I'm tentatively calling this the “Notice Human Life Project.” Much more to be figured out, but this is a beginning.

Blessings,

Fr Jim