

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Feast of Christ the King

By: Fr. Bob

A young boy was walking home through the park after attending Sunday school class. Somehow, he couldn't stop thinking about the lesson for that day on Jesus' parable of the last judgment. What impressed him most was when the teacher said, when you give something to another person, you're really giving it to Jesus.

As he continued through the park, he noticed an old woman sitting on a bench. She looked lonely and hungry. So he sat down next to her, took from his pocket a chocolate bar he had been saving, and offered some to her. She accepted with a smile. He liked her smile so much that after she had eaten her piece of chocolate he gave her more. This time they exchanged smiles and, for a while, they sat together in silence, just smiling at each other.

Finally, the boy got up to leave. As he began to walk away, he turned, ran back to the bench, and gave the woman a big hug. And she gave him her very best smile. When he arrived home, his mother saw a big smile on his face and asked, "What made you so happy today?" He said, "I shared my chocolate bar with Jesus. And she has a great smile."

Meanwhile, the old woman returned to her little apartment where she lived with her sister. "You're all smile," said the sister. "What made you so happy today?" To which she replied, "I was sitting in the park, eating chocolate bar with Jesus. And, you know, he looks a lot younger than I expected."

We celebrate the feast of Christ the King and we see the image in the Hebrew scripture of David the faithful King, the shepherd King who cares for and nurtures his flock. We see David the King who relies on the Covenant and holds true to the Covenant. We see David whose very being is a promise—a promise of the King who will nurture us all—the King we celebrate this day.

And in our reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians we are reminded that this King, this Jesus, is the one who makes present to us our loving God. It is this Jesus—the one who leads us and defines us who is to be our focus. It is this Christ who is to be given the foremost place in everything.

But then we are put face to face with the great paradox of Christ—the one who is to be our focus—hung on the cross between criminals. We are given the image of this suffering broken man as the one upon whom we should trust and place our hope with. This is the paradox of the Gospel. This is what forms us as a people.

The whole gospel of Luke that we read is fond of presenting paradoxes like this for us. All our expectations about society, personal responsibility and our relationship with things of this world are turned on their head in this gospel. The lowly are exalted, sinners are called righteous, the one who dies give life. We close this liturgical year with the ultimate paradox: The one to whom we offer glory and honor and praise is lifted high for all to see—powerless, hanging on the cross.

And it is this whole different way of looking at things—because of Jesus—that has been our story this whole year past. We have been told—in Word and in Worship—that everything we look at and everything we experience must be transformed by the cross of Jesus, by his resurrection, by his love.

And so our relationships with one another—those we love and those we only tolerate are transformed.

Our failures and successes, our sorrow and our joy all must be different because we have been formed by the shepherd who loves us.

And as we end this liturgical year and prepare to once again await the coming of the lord and as we search in our midst for him in the season of Advent, we need to question ourselves whether indeed we have been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus—is our vision clear enough to see the Christ on that park bench in the form of an poor old woman or in the smile and goodness of the little boy? Has the gospel worked for us?

David Knight, in a book entitled *His Way* broached the question for us "What difference does Jesus make?" by asking his readers to take a pencil and a piece of paper and ask themselves, "If I stopped believing in Jesus Christ, today, how would my life change? Can I write down five concrete ways the absence of belief in Jesus today would significantly affect my life tomorrow?"

It doesn't count, says Knight, to write down things like, "I will lose all meaning in life," or "Nothing would make sense anymore." These are not decisions you make about things you will do; these are just effects you see happening to you. Nor should you write down "I would stop going to Mass/Church on Sunday." You would obviously refrain from any such activity because attendance at Mass/Church is an expression of your belief in Christ. Just write down how your life would change, i.e., how you change it by concrete choices tomorrow, if you stopped believing in Jesus today. What you write down, insists Knight, will give you the measure of how conscious and real your Christian faith is right now.

And so we ask ourselves this day if the light and truth of Jesus burn brightly for us? As we celebrate Jesus Christ as King today do we truly allow him sovereign power over our lives, our thoughts, our heart, our will? Do my words and works reflect the fact that I have accepted the dominion of Christ over me?

And so as we end this liturgical year and prepare to pass the cycle again in a new liturgical year we need to reflect on how easily we find the Lord Jesus, how sincerely and truly we live his Word, how clearly we transmit to others who we are as baptized members of this very different, very surprising King. Let us pray to discover him anew and renew our covenant with Him.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

2 Samuel 5:1-3

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-43

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談美國的第一個感恩節

鄒保祿神

父

美國的第一個感恩節是始於一六二一年的秋季。早在一年前（1620）英國的清教徒爲了信仰自由的原因，大約有一百零一人，從彼利茅斯，在九月十六日，乘一百八十噸的五月花船向美國維琴尼亞州去，因為在那裡已得到定居的許可證。可是因為暴風和惡劣的天氣，於十一月二十一日抵達鱈魚角，即今日的麻州普文斯頓鎮。於是便在附近定居下來不久由四十一個男人簽訂了“五月花契約”，可說是美國第一個憲法，為居民訂立一些當守的法規。我們不很肯定在那一天慶祝第一個感恩節，可能會在九月底或十月初。

當時威廉布福領導人下令四個男人去打附近的水鳥，捉到一些鴨和鵝等當做食物。他們又收集一些水果。布先生便宣佈說：“讓我們以一種特別的方式一齊高興吧”。

其實“感恩”不只是清教徒所使用的，乃來自英國傳統秋季收穫的節日更可說源自中世紀的鄉村人民吃喝玩樂和玩一些遊戲。然而，他們不只是坐在桌上吃東西，也開始手牽著手祈禱，於是便開始有感謝上主的氣份。便開始有第一個感恩節。當地的瑪沙索和波加諾克人也帶了一些食物來共同慶祝例如鹿肉，蔬菜和火雞。

在十六世紀時，探險家們來到墨西哥時，發現中美洲的印第安人把火雞看同黃金一樣貴重。在一五二零年時代，已傳到西班牙，二十年後（1540）又到英國。到了一五七五年時代，中美洲的火雞在英國的聖誕節是很普遍的。在新英國的火雞比歐洲的長的大且又快。為此歐洲人多在冬天來美國買火雞肉。除了肉外他們吃魚例如鱈和南瓜糕以及蔓越橘汁。直到十七世紀尚未有叉子。人們吃時，多用手和刀子代替。

第一個感恩節乃回憶這些清教徒來美已有十一個月的時間，他們還要面對很多困難，例如寒冷的冬天，與當地的印第安人和平相處。否則的話，他們會如在他們之前法國的海員們被當地的印第安人殺害或被俘虜。為此他們信賴天主且希望神能保護他們在異鄉定居能度過一切難關。