

CHRIST the KING (A-4) (6:00pm & 9:30am)

A world-renowned expert in how stress affects the human body, Dr. Hans Selye, found that there are basically 2 culprits to poor health, and both are attitudes. One is the attitude of vengeance; the other is that of bitterness. To balance things off, he said that for good health one is best to have an attitude of gratitude, something the Bible says to live by. (Paraphrased from "Something to give thanks for," Dynamic Preaching, Vol. XX, No.4, 2002, pg. 61)

We celebrate the Feast of Christ the Kin. Are we grateful to God who wants us to be a family, for wanting to be kin to us? How wise a church to have chosen the readings we heard. In the 1st God seeks out lost sheep, as a mother seeks her lost child in a mall. In the Gospel, God cares and opts for the poor, whom society would just as soon see as permanently lost. God worries and cares for the poor. Our salvation, being one with God, hinges on whether we serve the poor or not.

In these bad economic times, it would be easy to yell at God with an attitude of bitterness, no? It is no wonder that this country is sick and getting sicker! When we spend one dollar on jails for every 5 cents spent on education, we are sick. When we have trillions of dollars of debt due to undeclared wars we insist on paying for, we are sick. When we desire vengeance and not forgiveness, when we are bitter to others for our own ills, we are sick and getting sicker.

God asks those of us with enough to eat, drink, be clothed, with enough time, talent & treasure, to share gratefully from our compassion, like the ones in the gospel who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visit the sick & in jail. Why? Because we need healing!

By living our Mission Statement in gratitude for discovering God's love of us, we live as real sons/daughters of the God who care for those in need because they are our brothers and sisters. Just like the Marines, who never leave a fellow marine behind on the battlefield, so a Christian never leaves a fellow child of God to suffer if we can help! Otherwise,

we'll like the rich Dives looking at Lazarus from the chasm of hell.

We just welcomed new catechumens in the Rite of Acceptance, the 1st step on the way to their baptism. They look to us to BE examples of care and compassion, examples being Church, being Kin, not just doing church. Do we show them how to serve in gratitude for God's serving us?

Jesus says the hungry, the marginated, the lost flock is himself. He is embodied, no incarnated, in them. What a God! What love! What a thing to do! Do we live believing this?

God is in the suffering. Have we discovered this? If not, we're not loving! God is there! Do we smell God's fragrance, see God's presence, touch Christ's broken body, taste God's goodness, and hear God's call to love as we are loved? If not, we are very sick, in need of healing. If yes, may we reach out and touch and make this world a better place, if we can. God is in the needy, in the have-nots! Let us ask for the grace to love unconditionally, for God hears the cries of the poor. Woe to the have's of this world who blame the poor, the needy, the alien, the stranger, for the problems of this country and who live as if they are entitled for all they have! What goats, and what an end awaits them!

Matthew 25 highlights the "Good Works" pillar of our Mission. If we want to be a sheep and not goats, we must act as if we are doing our serving to Christ. Who are our suffering kin of 2011? They are those who have lost their homes to predatory lenders. They are those who can't get a decent education. They are those who must choose between paying their mortgage or car-payment and their food or going to the doctor. They are those who come seeking a better life, and who are considered no-bodies by many of our society! If we act in gratitude, we will heal our "selves" and our country.

May our Catechumens, who will study God's Word heard today, see in us examples of God's saving Good Works. Let us not disappoint them!