
Feast of Christ the King Year C
Christ the Good Shepherd, OCC
Msgr. Harry Posner
11/24/2019

In preparation for today's homily, a song that was popular in the 1970's came to mind. Do you remember the song "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden"? Well, God has not promised us an easy life, but God has promised to be with us in the ups and downs that we face both individually and as a faith community. We witnessed that presence in today's Gospel with the compassion of Jesus for the repentant thief.

Each of us here today has faced struggles and endured hardship, some more than others. Our scriptures are full of stories of people who struggled to find God in the midst of challenge. The faith we celebrate today is built upon the shoulders of those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of faith. Their stories, their experiences, their dreams, have taught us that while life is not always easy, God's faithfulness and compassion is without end.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. This feast marks our belief that Jesus is Lord of all – King of Heaven and earth. It comes at the end of our church calendar to remind us to recommit ourselves, to work a little bit harder, to push ourselves a little further as we begin a new year on our faith journey.

In his short life, Jesus shared his vision of how we should strive to live. He faced adversity, but never lost hope. His greatness didn't come from wealth, strength, or physical appearance, but rather love. He didn't command an army or lord himself above others. Jesus didn't wear a crown of gold; he wore a crown of thorns. He didn't wear rings with precious stones; he had holes in his hands and feet that marked the love he has for you and for me. He didn't place burdens upon us; instead, he hoisted a cross upon his shoulders to set us free.

At the darkest moment, while he hung on the cross, Jesus remained loving and offered forgiveness to the repentant thief. It was the same when he triumphed over death. His first words to his friends were "Peace be with you". He didn't mention their betrayal or how they abandoned him on the cross; he didn't seek revenge. He simply

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loved. The truth we celebrate is that wherever we find ourselves in life, we are loved.

Today we dedicate our new worship space. The path that led us to this space had challenges, but we persevered. The way was not always easy, but the path we traveled together was paved with the dedication of each of you who have become part of this community. Your hard work, your dedication to help grow and support this parish has made it possible for us to be a safe place for saint and sinner, where we can learn to forgive and to love as Christ taught. While we haven't been promised a rose garden, this church is our safe harbor in the storms of life.

You've heard the real estate maxim: location, location, location. Well, that maxim also applies to our faith. We began our celebration today by singing the words "Let us build a house where love can dwell, where all can safely live. A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive...." That is what we strive to do at Christ the Good Shepherd.

This location is your home. It is God's house, and there is room for each of us here together, without exception. But, let us not lose sight of the importance of all the other locations where we also encounter Christ. Church is not limited to these four walls. In our own homes, our workplaces, in the grocery store, and gatherings of family and friends, God is found. Location, location, location. While this may be our safe harbor, our love must extend beyond these walls.

My friends, as we leave here today, let us keep the flame of love alive in our hearts. Let us always remember that no matter where we find ourselves, God is there – location, location, location.