

Feast of Christ the King – Cycle B

November 22, 2009

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Good morning. First we want to acknowledge we have a bunch of pagans here with us this morning. They all call themselves seminarians. So I ask the seminarians to stand up you pagans. There you go. Okay sit down. I don't see Hirsch. Where is Hirsch? Oh he is dead meat. Oh when you go home I want you to beat him. Anyway so pray for the seminarians that they become holy priests, that they become real priests, that they become priests who are madly in love with Jesus Christ and His Church.

So today we begin the end. This is the last week of Ordinary Time. Christ the King is the summation of the whole Church year and so Jesus speaks to us what that means. If you hear, as we celebrate Christ the King, He tells us two or three times in the Gospel today My Kingdom is not of this world. My Kingdom is not of this world. My Kingdom is not here. So no matter what we cannot bring God's Kingdom. We can't say it is a type of a kingdom we are looking for on earth. We are looking for another kingdom, a kingdom of heaven. That's why it's the end of the church year this is where we are going. Then He says, "Everyone who I came to testify to the truth and everyone who lives in the truth listens to My voice." And so it finds out whether we are part of our kingdom or God's kingdom. And the way we find out whether we are people of who listen to the voice of God instead of listening to our own voice, listening to the world's voice, listening to what other people say voice. Do we listen to God's voice and enter His kingdom or do we listen to our own voice and enter our own kingdom. Our own kingdom let me give you a hint is not heaven. Let me give you that little aside there. We have to talk about God and His kingdom and that means we obey Him in all things.

We just had the new members class and I said as I always do, those of you who are here who went through new member classes, and we talk about what it means for Christ be Lord and Savior of your life. We went through all of the stuff that means you obey Him. Yesterday I went to a Men's Retreat down in St. Andrews and the poor guys had to listen to me from ten in the morning to three in the afternoon. We talked about the same thing. You have got to be a man. You have got to be a man who decides that you are going to follow God. It takes a real man to be obedient to someone else instead of doing what you want. And that is what happens. Too many of us do what we want then we fit the church into our lives, and we fit Christ into our lives. And we ask Him to bless us when we need something. But it ultimately become a time of using God instead of obeying God. So this week if you are one of those people who go to daily Mass it is a beautiful week because we get examples of what it means that the Kingdom of Heaven is not on this earth and what it means to follow Christ and His kingdom. We begin this week with someone named Eleazar. Eleazar, it is all from the book of Maccabees, I love the book of Maccabees because it is a very real book. There is no la la in Maccabees. "Eleazar, one of the foremost scribes, a man of advanced age and noble appearance was being forced to open his mouth to eat pork. But preferring a glorious death to a life of defilement, he spat out the meat, and went forward of his own accord to the instrument of torture as people ought to do who have courage to reject the food which is unlawful to taste even for love of life." Then they go and tell him, listen, Eleazar you are a nice guy. We've always liked you. Here is another piece of meat. We will give you a piece of beef. You are allowed to eat that. Then everybody will think you ate it but you will be fine. And he says, "Far be it from me to bring disgrace into this old head of mine. I would gladly die than to disobey the word of God." So

we have an old man, Eleazar, who is gladly knows that this world is not home, that we are just passing through; that the kingdom of Heaven is worth giving your life for on earth.

Then we go to Chapter 7 of Maccabees. Seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourged by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law. "Most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother, who saw her seven sons perish in a single day, yet bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord. Filled with a noble spirit that stirred her womanly heart with manly courage, she exhorted each of them in the language of their ancestors, "I don't know how you got here, but I know the God of the universe will take care of you." And she watched every one of her sons die gladly than to disobey God's law. Then you go on until you get Judas Maccabees and they tell him the same type of reality. "You go and obey our law instead of God's law." And he went beyond. He just said no. Then another Jew got up and he went and did it and he disobeyed God's law. Do you know what Judas Maccabees did to him? He killed him right then and there in front of everybody. And then he killed the messenger of the king. Then he said, "Anyone who wants to follow me and God come with us now." Then you see they became a great. They would rather die than to disobey God. That is what it means for Christ to be King. That is what it means for us to live for the kingship of heaven instead of the kingdom of this earth. And yet too many of us are only looking for our comfort on earth. Too many of us, okay God give me what I want now. God didn't give any of them an easy life.

Could you imagine being that mother, ladies? Watching all seven of your children die? And then you tell them it is okay I would rather you die then disobey God. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that someone comes in here, let just say here and again it has to be practical, like I would rather die than have sex before marriage because that goes against God's law. I would rather die than to ever miss Mass on Sunday because that goes against law and it is like spitting in God's face. I would rather die than do any of these things. You fill in the blanks. Are we people who live for this world and our comfort? Are we people that know that this world isn't home; that we are just passing through; that our true kingdoms are in heaven. Everyone of them would gladly die for God because they know it is not here. How about you? Is your kingdom on this earth and everything now? Do you want everything now? Do you want it your way or do you want it God's way? Would you rather die than commit a sin against God? Well I know you would say well I am not like that Father. Well you should be. Remember St. Dominic Savio? St. Dominic Savio had a great spiritual director. His name was St. John Bosco. When Dominic Savio, when he was making his First Communion, think about this, 7 years old he is writing down his goals in life and the things he must do. And one of those things he wrote is death before sin. Here is a 7 year old boy who said he would rather die than commit a mortal sin. He lived for the kingdom of God. He lived for the kingship of the King. He didn't live for himself. He didn't live for the world. He didn't live for others. He lived for the King. You and I, weak though we are, people who are very human beings, absolutely like every one of those people I just read about in Maccabees, every one of them were weak human beings. But when they submitted to the truth of God, God raised them up. So will He do with you and so will He do with me if that is our desire.

So today the question is simple, will Christ be the King of your life? If not, if He has not been will He be today? Will you look at Him and say like young Dominic Savio, death before sin? Death before ever I would disobey the law of God? That is the kind of courage that He wants to give you. That is the kind of discipleship that He is asking of you. Because that is what He did for you. He would rather die than live

without any of us and He did. Would you rather die than live without Him? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.