**Wellspring
Fransalian Center for Spirituality**

November 22, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today is the feast of Christ the King. We proclaim Christ as our king and celebrate his kingship over us. We rejoice in our noble and royal character and pledge our loyalty to Christ our king and our Lord. At our baptism, we were anointed “priest, prophet and king” which describes our character as a holy, noble, and royal people. Holy people must live holy lives; noble people must live noble lives and royal people must live noble lives. Lives of holiness, nobility and royalty are lived out in response to the simple, daily needs of ordinary people.

The Gospel reading of today gives us simple but challenging insights into living holy, noble, and royal lives under the kingship of Jesus, our Lord and master. In this reading, Mathew invites us into a vivid imaginative courtroom scene where judgment of those who are worthy to be welcomed into eternal life is taking place. “Loving kindness” is used as the standard for the judgment of worthiness for eternal life**.** It is help in response to daily needs of ordinary people: giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, comforting the sick – things that anyone can do, things that do not require training in skills or a degree or diploma from a university. It is not performance of miracles or preaching of great sermons or donations of large sums of money or holding higher positions in society or any recognition offered to a person by the world, but in simple acts of loving kindness which has become part of the very nature, character of a person.

Acts of kindness are done not for a reward, not even thinking that it is done for the Lord, but it has become part of a person’s character. It is help which is uncalculating. In the parable, those who helped did not know that they were helping Christ and gaining merit for eternal life. And those who failed to help claimed that they would have helped if they knew the Lord was in need. Acts of loving kindness flow from loving hearts, from loving people without expecting praise, reward and merits. It is the nature, the character of loving people to do loving things in response to the simple, everyday needs of ordinary people.

The judgment is about what you have become and not what you have done or not done. You have become a new creation. You have become a noble person. You have become sons of God. You have become sensitive to those around you. You have become especially sensitive to the marginal people in the community. You have reached out in kindness because you just couldn’t do otherwise. You have become a true disciple of Jesus.

I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to reflect on how your day has been and how you have been reaching out to others in kindness and compassion.

God bless you and your family.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**

 **November 22, 2020**

**Penitential Act**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Let us acknowledge our sins and pray for forgiveness and peace.

A moment of silence for remembering your sinfulness

**Pray the formula of general confession**:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,

that I have greatly sinned,

in my thoughts and in my words,

in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

through my fault, through my fault,

through my most grievous fault.

therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,

all the Angels and Saints,

and you, my brothers and sisters,

to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Lord have Mercy Christ have Mercy Lord have Mercy

**Collect**

Almighty ever-living God,

whose will is to restore all things

in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,

grant, we pray, that the whole creation,

set free from slavery,

may render your majesty service

and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

**Liturgy of the Word**
Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17**

Ezekiel was a prophet in Exile. Chapter 34 is the Prophet’s critique of the performance of the leaders, the shepherds of the people. The good shepherd had the well-being of his sheep in his heart. The leaders of Ezekiel’s time were not concerned about the well-being of their people. They were concerned about themselves and used their power for personal gain. Ezekiel saw the exile itself as a result of the exploitation of the innocent people by their leaders. People have suffered and were scattered and exiled from their land and were forced to wander aimlessly like “sheep without shepherd” in Babylon.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

Ezekiel promised a new beginning. God will replace the unfaithful and irresponsible shepherds and God himself will lead his people. God would gather his exiled and scattered people and tenderly care for them, lead them home and reestablish them as his own people again.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

**Responsorial Psalm:** **Psalm 23**

David had been a shepherd and he knew how to care for the sheep and what it cost him. He became shepherd of his people. He had to figure out how he should care for them. He knew the sheep well and now he must come to know his people, their ways, their needs and their concerns. This problem gave him a new awareness of what God, the true shepherd, is like in his relationship to his people.

God knows his people just as they are in all their need, in their stubbornness and stupidity as well as in their value and worth. Like a good shepherd…God reaches out, searches out to the lost and keeps them safe. Like a shepherd…..God provides food, drink, safety, light in darkness, comfort and strength in “dark valley moments”. This Psalm proclaims the enduring, steadfast, loyal, unconquerable love of God, the good shepherd, who will never let us slip out of his hands!

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose,

Beside restful waters he leads me;
He refreshes my soul.

**Pray the whole Psalm now – if not now, pray it later when you have a little more time**

**Second Reading: I Corinthians 15:20-26, 28**

Paul assured his Corinthian readers that Christ had conquered sin and death by his death and resurrection and that he is now Shepherd King. Unlike other (earthly) kings who gloat in their victories and enjoy the loot, the victory of Jesus is shared by all. Paul says, “we too shall share in Christ’s victory over death and sin”.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

Paul goes on to say that Christ is the “first-fruits” of what will happen to all his followers. For the Jews, the “first-fruits” were a sign of the harvest to come. The resurrection of Jesus was the sign of the resurrection of all believers, which was yet to come. Just as the new barley could not be used until the first fruits have been duly offered, so the new harvest of life could not come until Christ had been raised from the dead.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

The Jews believed that no man existed by himself and for himself. Every individual existed in a web of connections…. “no man is an island” as Thomas Merton says. Each person lives in connection with other persons around him, before him and after him. With this understanding of man, the Jews had come to believe that all had sinned in Adam. When Adam sinned all sinned and all were under the penalty of death. Paul says, in Christ all are conquered from the power of sin and death. The effects of sin and death are overcome in the death and resurrection of Christ. Christ has conquered death and sin and liberated us and fulfilled his Father’s will for us.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

**Gospel: Mathew 25:31-46**

In this excerpt, Mathew invites us into a vivid imaginative courtroom scene where judgment of those who are worthy to be welcomed into eternal life is taking place. The highlight of the scene is the criteria for the judgment of worthiness: **loving kindness.** Loving persons do loving acts. Kind people do kind deeds. It is help in simple, ordinary things, response to daily needs of ordinary people: giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, comforting the sick – things that anyone can do, things that do not require training in skills or a degree or diploma from a university. It is not performance of miracles or preaching of great sermons or donations of large sums of money or holding higher positions in society or any recognition offered to a person by the world, but in simple acts of loving kindness which has become part of the very nature, character of a person.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

Acts of kindness are done not for a reward, not even thinking that it is done for the Lord, but it has become part of a person’s nature. It is help which is uncalculating. In the parable, those who helped did not know that they were helping Christ and gaining merit for eternal life. And those who failed to help said, “if we had known it was you, we would have helped”. Acts of loving kindness flow from loving hearts, from loving people without expecting praise, reward and merits….it is the nature, the character of loving people to do loving things in response to the simple, everyday needs of ordinary people.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

The judgment is about what you have become and not what you have done or not done. You have become a new creation. You have become a noble person. You have become sons of God. You have become sensitive to those around you. You have become especially sensitive to the marginal people in the community. You have reached out in kindness because you just couldn’t do otherwise.

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

Today is the feast of Christ the King - we proclaim Christ as our king and celebrate his kingship over us, rejoice in our royal and noble character and pledge our loyalty to Christ our king and master and Lord. Noble people must live noble lives. Kingdom people must live kingdom values. The values of kingdom are lived out in response to the simple, daily need of ordinary people.

**Take a moment and pray: May your kingdom come! May your will be done! May**

**your purpose be fulfilled! May I bring my will into harmony with your will, O Lord!**

**Dwell on this thought for a few moments before reading further.**

**Intercessions: Take a few moments to pray from your heart…….**

Remember our Holy Father Pope Francis, Bishop Joseph Strickland and all our spiritual leaders.

Remember our president and all leaders our country and the world and pray that God will enlighten them with His wisdom to make wise decisions during these difficult days.

Remember your most urgent need and that of your family and those in your care.

Remember those who are affected by COVID-19 and those who care for them.

Remember those who are searching for a cure for COVID-19.

Remember all who suffer and all who have no one to care for them.

Our Father...

**Gracious God, who renews your Church in every age, may we live each day in the light and life of Easter until we come into their fullness with your risen Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, our Master and our Savior. Amen**

**Spiritual Communion**

Lord Jesus, I believe in your real presence in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar. I

place myself in your presence and adore you, worship you and glorify you. I am unable to

receive you in Holy Communion at Mass today. I hunger and thirst for your way, your

truth and your life. Come into my heart Lord and satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst.

Bless me that I may give witness to your presence in my life. Amen

**Be Still: Spend a few moments in silent prayer**

**Prayer after Communion:**

Having received the food of immortality,

we ask, O Lord,

that, glorying in obedience

to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe,

we may live with him eternally in his heavenly Kingdom.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Saint of the Day, November 22 - Saint Cecilia and 11 other saints are remembered this day.**

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Start by doing what’s necessary, then do what’s possible
and suddenly you are doing the impossible.
(St. Francis of Assisi)**