

The Feast of Christ the King
Christ the King • November 22-23, 2008

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. This is a special celebration for our parish; it is our Feast day. Today we celebrate 42 years of being a parish. Look back over the years, we celebrate all that has been achieved. But looking forward we know there is still much to do. Today, we rededicate ourselves to the service of Christ the King.

It may seem a little surprising to celebrate Christ as King. He was not born in a palace, but a manger. He didn't live in a castle, but wandered the countryside of Judea. His crown wasn't made of gold, but thorns. And instead of a throne, he got the rough and wooden cross.

A surprising king indeed! So maybe we could look to today's Gospel to understand this Christ the King. This Gospel is full of surprises. Both those on the left and the right were surprised by the Lord. For the blessed, they had no expectation that they would be welcomed into the Kingdom. They stand overwhelmed by the Son of Man's praise of their ministry to others. In complete ignorance, expecting no reward whatsoever, they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, sheltered strangers, comforted the sick and supported the imprisoned. They served expecting nothing and gained everything.

Just as surprised is the other group. They fully expected to be welcomed into the Kingdom. Yet they are turned away because they failed to see Christ in the lives of people in need. They stand shocked at the Lord's condemnation for their short sightedness and lack of action. They expected everything and gained nothing.

So where do we stand? This Gospel should surprise and disturb us. Let's get real. For 37 million Americans, there is a thin line: between eviction and home, between hunger and health, between unemployment and work, between anxiety and stability. This line is the poverty line, and it is set at an annual income of just over \$20,000 for a family of four.

Today is also the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Sunday. CCHD helps people rise above the poverty line by funding programs that focus on addressing root causes—not just symptoms—of poverty. In the midst of an unsure economic climate in America, CCHD's efforts to break the cycle of poverty are more important than ever. CCHD's funding has resulted in positive, long-term community improvements since 1970. CCHD-funded groups work to create well-paying jobs, strengthen education programs, create affordable housing, and increase access to health care.

So where do we stand? This Gospel should surprise and disturb us. It calls us to open our eyes and see. It call us to live in such a way that Christ our King is welcomed in every person that we meet, every moment God gives us, every needy person who asks for some of our time, our energy, our love, our compassion.

Today is a day of celebration. We celebrate our feast day, we celebrate that we have so great a patron, we celebrate the task we have been given and we celebrate the fact that we are such a diverse group of people rich in many talents and united around Christ the King.