

November 25, 2018

A priest who was known to be long winded with his homilies/sermons, and usually had seven or eight pages to read from, one day he got very animated at the pulpit and he was going all over with his hands and finally he knocked his pages all over the floor, in front of the sanctuary. As he came around and started bending around and picking the papers back up trying to put them together he said, "Now where was I?" And someone in the congregation said, "At the end!"

England's Arnold Toynbee, is regarded as the greatest historian of all time. His masterpiece is a twelve volume work called, "The Study of History." It studies in detail the history of twenty six civilizations: analyzes how they began, how they developed and how and why they declined and eventually died. Summing up the place of Jesus in the parade of these civilizations and their people, Toynbee writes poetically, "When we set out on this study we found ourselves moving in the midst of a mighty host. As we pressed forward the marchers, company by company, have fallen. And now as we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed on the further shore, a single figure fills the whole horizon, that figure is Jesus of Nazareth."

It prompted another British historian, (I don't think we have any American ones), H.G. Wells, yes the same one who wrote, "War of the Worlds." In his conclusion about Jesus, he said, "The reader and I live in different countries where to millions of people, Jesus is more than a man, but the historian must disregard this fact, he must adhere to the evidence that would pass unchallenged if his book were to be read in every nation under the sun. Now, it's interesting and significant that a historian like myself who doesn't even call himself Christian, finds the picture centering irresistibly around the life and character of this most significant man. The historians test of an individuals greatness is, "What did he leave to grow?" Did he start men to think along fresh new lines with a vigor that persisted after him? By this test, Jesus stands first in history.

Another person summed it up very well in that he said, "Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman, he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty years old, and for three years he was an itinerate preacher. He never wrote a book, he never held an office, he never owned a home, he never had a family, he never went to college, he never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against him. He was turned over to his enemies, he went through a mockery of a trial, he was nailed to a cross between two thieves, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he owned, his coat. When he was dead he was taken down and was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Such was his human life. Twenty centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the human race. It's fallen on the mark when we say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man upon the earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life."

It's interesting that historians have proven that Jesus existed, have proven how powerful a person that Jesus was in the history of the human race. Yet, how many people still doubt, "Jesus never existed, I don't believe in Jesus." Okay fine, I have a niece that doesn't believe the world's round, that doesn't mean she's going to fall off one day, but she doesn't believe it. So today's feast, "Christ the King," serves as a grand finale to our Church year, every year. Christ the King feast invites us to do two things; invites us to honor Jesus as the Lord and King of all creation and of all human history, and we do that every time we celebrate Mass, we celebrate Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. And second, more importantly

it invites us to express that honor in a practical and personal way in our lives. Let me tell you a story that epitomizes this. This young woman, name was Christine, she was excited about entering the Catholic Church on the Easter vigil service. But she had one apprehension, her father had belonged to an anti-Catholic church, hated the Catholic Church, and she felt he would not approve even though he was dead. She had this fear all the time even though she went through it. At the Easter vigil the priest gave each person a keepsake. He gave them a card with a poem and a little cross. The poem was intitled, "I Carry a Cross in My Pocket." It read,

"I carry a cross in my pocket, it's not my identification for all the world to see, it's just an understanding between my savior and me. Reminds me to be thankful for my blessings, day after day. And strive to serve Him better in all that I do and say, reminding no one but me that Jesus is the Lord of my life, if only I'll let Him be."

When the priest handed Christine the card, she looked at the poem and burst into tears. She told the priest later, that just before her father died, he reached into his wallet and he pulled out a piece of paper and on, it was that same poem. And she felt that this was an affirmation that it was Okay for her to be Catholic. "It's alright Christine, I approve."

That poem and the stories explain what Christ the King is all about. It's about inviting Christ into our hearts and asking Him to become Lord of our lives, each one of us. This is what we are supposed to be doing as Christians. Jesus has one throne we all know about, it's the most famous throne in the world, it's a cross. Everywhere you go and you see Jesus on it, that's His throne, it was made of wood, He didn't sit up straight He laid down on it, and He took away our suffering on it instead of imposing His will. We have another throne built within us, it's our heart. Jesus wants to sit in our hearts. Jesus wants to have His throne in our hearts. Like the poem says, "So that He can help us in all we do and say," and show the world that we truly are His followers, that we truly are Christians, and that He is King of our lives and of the universe.

God bless you.