

## Christ the King, Cycle A, Nov. 16, 2017

Whenever I get a hole in one of my socks, I either throw it away, or throw it into the rag pile. I wouldn't ever consider trying to repair it. But, my mother would. She grew up during the time of the Great Depression of the 1930's. She told me, that as a little girl, she would darn the holes in her socks when she got up in the morning before going off to school, because that was the only pair of socks she owned. In some ways, though, her family was fortunate. Her father had a job. He worked for the local dairy. So, every Sunday, the family had ice cream to eat.

But, there were people who starved to death in this country during the Great Depression. It's not that they were unable to enjoy a luxury like ice cream. They lacked even the basic necessities of life.

During hard times, the poor and the needy suffer the most. And Jesus tells us in the gospel reading that we just heard, "Whatever you did for one of these least ones, you did it for me." That is the bottom line. We don't even have to realize what we are doing. We just have to do it.

Notice, that in the gospel reading, neither those who cared for the needy nor those who neglected them realized that they were dealing with Jesus. They both express surprise. We, on the other hand, cannot plead ignorance, not that it would do any good. After all, we have insider information. We know that the Son of God, who was born into the human race, identifies with all human beings as a result, with both the big shots and with the nobodies.

Jesus identifies with us all, but the test of that identification lies in how we treat the least ones of these. And they are the ones most likely to suffer in hard times. For example, down in Mexico where the earthquake struck, in Puerto Rico and Texas where the hurricane hit, it is the poor who have the most difficulty in rebuilding their lives. In parts of the world where war is being waged, it is the poor who have difficulty in fleeing to safety. They are the ones who are most severely affected by the fighting.

Those are some examples, but I am sure that there will be more. There will always be ample opportunity for us to care for the least among us. That is what we are called to do, as sons and daughters of God. That is what we are called to do, as citizens of the Kingdom.

Notice, in the gospel reading, those who are blessed are told that they will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. On the other hand, those who are condemned are cast into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. It wasn't prepared for the condemned. It was prepared for the devil. The condemned just ended up there, because they had nowhere else to go, because they did not live up to their calling as citizens of the Kingdom. They were not worthy of the kingdom which had been prepared for them.

God wants us to live in the Kingdom, to enjoy the fullness of life, the Kingdom where truth and justice prevail. That is God's intention for us. That is what God is calling us to. The question is, how do we respond to that call? Do our actions live out what our words proclaim?