

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. At the heart of this Feast is recognizing that *I am NOT Lord of all*, nor is any other created power (human or angelic), but only God! The Gospel today teaches us how to recognize Christ and how to honor Him. The interesting thing from the Gospel, is that when Jesus comes in power on His throne at the end of time, He shares that He was not to be recognized in the great things of the world, but in the least ones:

whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me. (Matthew 25:40)

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta recognized this fact, that Jesus was present in the least, in the hungry, in the poor, in the suffering. She dedicated her life to serving these least, little ones. What a powerful witness! I remember hearing a Catholic speaker named Steve tell about how he spent his vacation time in Calcutta in order to work with Mother Teresa... and she wasn't there! He was somewhat ashamed at his inability to do some of the more "disgusting" jobs needed at the home of the dying, but the sisters were very kind and assigned him roles he could handle for his time there. On Steve's last day in the house, Saint Teresa arrived... and not only did she come, she had him work directly with her.

Saint Mother Teresa invited Steve to go with her into the streets. When they found a dying man in the gutter, Steve couldn't tell her that he was too disgusted to pick him up... after all, this is Mother Teresa we're talking about! So Steve picked this dying man up, and carried him (albeit, as far from his own body as possible) back to the home for the dying. When they arrived there, Mother Teresa instructed Steve to remove the man's clothing and place him in the bath. Again, somewhat revolted, but not wanting to refuse Mother Teresa, he did what he was told. Then she told Steve to bath him as she went to attend to other duties. At one point as he was bathing the dying man, he suddenly noticed a brilliant light in the bathroom. He looked down and literally saw Jesus in the tub – in this dying man. He stopped in awe. Then he heard the voice of Mother Teresa behind him, "**You saw Him, didn't you?**"

Most often Jesus does not manifest Himself in such a way, but that doesn't mean that we can't train ourselves to see Him. If we dare to spend the time gazing upon His Eucharistic Body in Adoration, we will train our eyes to see Him under the form of bread. We will also train our eyes to see Him in the lowliest of people. He truly is there, even when they don't recognize His presence in themselves. Yet Jesus IS present. **Do we see Him?**

As we hear in the Gospel, caring for Christ is essential to our salvation. Notice, the ones who are condemned are not condemned because of *sins of commission* (sins they commit, like stealing, lying or adultery), but because of *sins of omission* – things they failed to do, ways they failed to love. They did not reach out to the hungry, and lonely, and poor; they did not do Acts of Mercy (and here's another reminder to make sure we are continuing to focus on Acts of Mercy, as we steadily make our way to **1,000,000 Acts of Mercy**). **Do we see Him?**

In one sense, it is not necessary to recognize Christ in the people we serve – after all, those Jesus calls into the inheritance didn't recognize Him. However, we have to be careful not to do service for the sake of service, or because it makes *me* feel good. To throw a sandwich at a beggar on the street may feed his stomach, but has done nothing to recognize the sacred dignity of the person. By striving to see Christ in this person, we will want to give him the dignity of a name, of love. **Do we see Him?**

Jesus is not just present in the materially poor. In the story, Jesus is present in the lonely. And don't we have a society of loneliness today. We connect via Facebook – so oddly named since we can spend our life on it and never have to be face to face with anyone – yet never really connect with anyone. Think about the people you work with: how many of them are really Jesus, in the distressing disguise of a lonely person? Think about your kids. Think about the elderly alone in nursing homes. As I would go with my mother to visit my grandfather in the nursing home (he had 10 kids, and he had constant company throughout the week), I would lament when my mother told me about certain residents who never had any visitors. **Jesus: alone and sad.** Here's a hard one: in our own loneliness, do we recognize that Jesus is present in us, not despite our loneliness, but *because* of it? **Do we see Him?**

May we take this holy day to honor Christ the King, giving Him the honor that is His due – both in the Eucharistic species of Holy Communion, and in each person that we meet.