

Love Is Very Practical - A Sermon on The Feast of Christ The King

In one of the novels by Nikos Kazantzakis, there is a story about a man who spent his whole life saving money for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After he had collected a large sum, he packed his travel bags, said goodbye to his family and friends, and set off for the Holy City. However, as soon as he left the gates of his hometown, he noticed the beggar who had neither a house nor anyone to help him. So he decided to give him all his savings and come back home. When the surprised family saw him returning home so quickly, they ran to meet him and asked ironically, "Have you been to Jerusalem? Have you seen the Holy City?" Not ashamed, he answered them with a stoic smile, "Yes, I got there; I even saw Jesus."

Today we live in a generation that is experiencing a severe crisis of authority on all its levels—the authority of the father and mother at home, the teacher at school. The authority of managers in workplaces and politicians at every level have been challenged. This applies not only to our nation but to the whole world. Power is not more trustworthy. But there is a danger here. The more the authority does not deserve trust, the more often it resorts to violence. Unable to rule over people through law and truth, power uses force. The road is dangerous because the violence stirs up rebellion. Any authority that resorts to violence will sooner or later encounter a rebellion. It is so in the relationship of parents to children, teachers to students, management to employees, authority to the nation.

Today we are celebrating the Solemnity of Christ the King, the only Ruler who is in perfect control of the situation and never uses violence against his disciples. Christ is the King of hearts, the King of love, unity and peace.

Today, this King of Love is calling us to exceed our limitations.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote:

Christ died so that we might live,

Christ served to make us reign,

Christ became an exile so that we could return to our father's house,

Christ humbled himself to the point of death on a cross, to lift us up above all the works of his hands.

While living on earth, in these imperfect human structures, we must not forget that we do not live for the earth. We cannot limit ourselves to human and down-to-earth realities. We are called to transform it; we are here to bring the Kingdom of God closer; kingdoms of love and justice, peace and mercy. It will only be possible if we implement these values in our everyday life, in our relations with others.

Today, in the Revelation of Saint John, we hear the words: "By his blood he has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom."

This Kingdom is not an intellectual concept. This is not a goal that will be achieved at the end of time. This Kingdom will not be fulfilled outside of us and without us. This Kingdom is the deepest calling of each of us, here and now.

We often wonder what each of us will have to do to be saved. The message of the Gospel is simple. Jesus' words are simple. Jesus came to earth as a Man, to reveal to us the father's love. Jesus said that at the end of time we will be judged on love alone.

We all want and need to know and feel that we are loved. If we do not feel loved, then we cannot love others. Why? Because love is self-giving. When we do not feel valued in the eyes of others and loved, we are afraid to give ourselves to others.

Jesus, dying for us on the cross, gave us an extremely strong and clear sign that we are loved by Him, and that we are able to love others.

Only love is creative. Only love releases the best and the noblest in us. Only love makes us a Kingdom. Only through love, we can reign on the earth.

Christ, the King of the Universe, proclaims the perfect Law of Love. "Love one another as I have loved you." Anyone who accepts Christ as King and Lord must also take His Law of Love.

The true Enthronement of Christ as King of our hearts occurs through openness to His merciful love and active love of our neighbour.

Jesus is practical; His message is practical; His love is practical. Let us also be practical and specific in love. Let's take a look around us! There are so many "faces of Christ" around us that need practical love.

Feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, take the homeless for the night, clothe the naked, visit the sick, visit those who are locked up.

Be human, and then you will become like our God.

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