

Nov. 23 & 24/Last Sunday of the Year  
Feast of Christ the King

All Saints Parish, Syr., NY  
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Today, being the last Sunday of the Church Year, the Solemnity of Christ the King is celebrated. It was so named by Pope Pius XI in 1925 to say to society's secularism and hostility against the church, that governments and philosophies come and go but Christ, the King of the Universe, remains. Even though we are taken up with television shows and movies about Kings and Queens, Christ the King is an image that we cannot relate to because it smacks of domination, power, wealth and separateness.

Our first reading today presents a shepherd king, David, who eventually unites all the kingdoms of Israel. When David goes to the north of Israel to be accepted by the people they say: "We are your own flesh and blood." So he is anointed because of kinship.

Jesus is born into that same lineage. His birth takes place in David's city, Bethlehem, yet Jesus refuses to occupy any throne. His throne is the cross. He never takes a crown but the crown of thorns. When he fasted for 40 days in the desert he was offered power and authority over all the kingdoms of the world. He never called himself a king. He called himself the Good Shepherd. Jesus resists any authority or domination that is self-exalting. He shares forgiveness, even from the cross. Jesus dies as he lived, among the outcasts.

His are the people who are lost, poor, broken in body, mind or spirit.

Jesus authority is based on love. While Jesus is the image of the invisible God, we are to be the image of the now invisible Jesus.

Tim had a conversion one day while sitting on a plane, having come from a high powered meeting during which he negotiated the selling of instruments of war. Right then and there, he knew how unlike Jesus his work made him. He decided to quit, a move that changed the life of his entire family since they no longer had his income. The kids had to go to local colleges instead of their far flung ivy-league schools. Tim and his wife sold their second car and downsized their home. Today they look back and thank God for Tim's conversion which ultimately brought more integrity and love into the family. Tim did what he had to do to move toward being the image of Jesus.

Bishop Untener, bishop of Saginaw Michigan for 24 years was called the "Hungarian Gypsy" because he lived out of his trunk. That's where he kept his \$12 shepherd's crook and the miter that he rarely used. He sold his house and lived with the priests, moving 69 times so he could get to know his people. He often said: "The smallest act of love changes the balance of love in the world." His was an image of a true shepherd. An image of Jesus made visible.

He once said in a sermon: "At baptism we are not crowned, we are drowned. We die to one way of life to rise to a new way. In confirmation, we receive oil not a crown on our heads and our confirmed with God's Spirit. As we leave the Eucharistic table, we do not leave shouting battle cries, rather we leave to become the humble Jesus we have consumed.

Our reading from Colossians today is an ancient song: "Jesus is the image of the invisible God" and that too is our calling.