

Holy Spirit Province

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

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WELCOMING JESUS CHRIST AS OUR KING

A man called Michael has told this story about being a witness to the truth in an everyday situation: He recalls what happened:

My wife and I are building extensions on our house, and while that's going on we decided to move out and rent. Earlier this year a hailstorm damaged some parts of our town, so I went over to our old house to check for damage. I looked it over and found no new damage.

My wife mentioned that some people were claiming for a new roof from insurance companies. I thought about this and decided that it would be easy to do. But something inside me said it was wrong. I told my wife what I thought, expecting an argument, but to my surprise I didn't get one. My builder asked me, 'Why is everyone in your street getting a new roof and you're not?' I answered that I was just trying to be honest. He turned his head with a blank stare that said to me 'You're off your rocker', and to tell the truth I was starting to think the same way. But again there was this feeling inside.

Recently, [he continues], my wife was visiting three doors down from our old house. They have a new roof courtesy of the hailstorm. She came home and said, 'You won't believe this, but on their kitchen table were one hundred and two photos of the new roof. It has all gone wrong.'

Michael explains his stance:

When I was a kid, a teacher who was a nun said that our guardian angel is that little voice inside us that steers us in the right direction. I still believe this. I also believe that what you say and do affects everyone around you. Surely this is the living God at work.

Michael's story suggests how seriously he takes the answer that Jesus at his trial gave to the question put to him by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate: 'So you are a king then?' 'Yes, I am a king,' Jesus said, ' ... I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice' (John 18:37)

Jesus is a king all right - the king of kings, and the lord of lords, in fact. He is our King, our Leader, one whom we respect, honour and love, one to whom we readily and gladly bend the knee and bow the head.

Was it not to bring in that new world that he called 'the kingdom of God' the very reason that he came among us? Did he not come to earth to change our hearts, to rid us of all evil and all sin, to redeem and liberate us? Did he not come to bring us and everyone else God's gifts of justice, joy, peace, health and wellbeing? Did he not come to bring an end to all hostility, all wars and all terror? Did he not both live and die to set people free from hunger, poverty, want and disease? Isn't that the very reason too that he calls each of us by name, hugs each of us to his heart and stays with us till the end of the world and beyond?

The kingship of Jesus, then, is not like that of other kings and rulers. It is not about wealth and power, domination and control. It is not about military might, conquests and national security. It is not about palaces, estates, splendour, riches and magnificence. No! His kingship is about truth, honesty and integrity. It is about goodness and generosity, service and self-sacrifice, justice and love. It is about mercy and care - mercy and care for all people, but especially for those who are poor, broken-hearted, neglected or ignored.

Witnessing to the truth was something that Pilate was finding very hard to do. He had already found Jesus innocent. If he was to act on that truth, surely he would have set Jesus free. It seems, then, that while he may have been sincerely concerned about Jesus' safety, he was not concerned enough that Jesus was innocent. For he refused to act on that fact, that truth, when it was in his power to do so.

What about us? Do you and I really qualify as subjects of his kingdom? Do we belong to him or not? Do we call him 'Our Lord', and if we do, do we actually mean it and live it?

Today our liturgical year is coming to an end. Next Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, and the start of the Year A Cycle of Readings. Today, Jesus our King is inviting us to bring this year of the Church to an end by choosing him once again as our Leader, Lord and Saviour, and by recommitting ourselves to his rule in our lives by living his teachings and values. With the help of his amazing grace, then, are you and I ready and willing to renew our commitment to him during the rest of our prayer-time together today?

If we are ready and willing, let's make that commitment right here and right now, make it from the heart, make it for real, and make it for keeps!

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