

Homily – Christ the King Church

November 24, 2019

Viva Cristo Rey! These words come readily to our lips and acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of our lives. *Viva Cristo Rey!* It is very easy merely to shout these words in triumph – or in defiance against the powers of evil. But Jesus is not a warrior king. He came into the world to teach us about God’s mercy and compassion, God’s tenderness and love. He shows us that God is close to us. Jesus taught us about God in his own words and actions, in his listening ear, through his healing hands.

On Calvary, Jesus stretched out his arms on the cross to embrace the whole world. His throne is the cross. His crown is of thorns. He sheds his Precious Blood, giving his life us to show us God’s incredible love for us. Some of the crowd at his crucifixion challenge him to save himself. They do not show pity or compassion. They laugh at his suffering. His disciples have run away. Jesus, however, knows that his heavenly Father remains with him through an agonizing death and beyond, to resurrection and new life. One of the criminals crucified with him asks to be remembered when Jesus enters his kingdom. Jesus promises the man eternal life in Paradise!

Jesus proclaimed and inaugurated the Kingdom of God where even the poor and the lame are welcome -- a kingdom where the merciful, the sorrowful, and the peacemakers are blessed. Jesus did not come to conquer, but to invite.

Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God is **already** here among us. We see signs of the kingdom whenever we see someone reaching out to the needy with generosity, helping a sick person with tenderness, standing in solidarity with the needy and the oppressed. It is also very evident that the Kingdom of God is **not yet** fully present in our world. We live in a time of great chaos, violence, greed, the search for power and domination. Our journey as missionary disciples is often difficult, the cross we carry heavy. But God is with us to strengthen and support us as he was with his beloved Son.

We gather here in hope, trusting in God's love and care for us. If Jesus is truly the Lord of our lives, then we must strive in all we say and do to build up the kingdom of God. We need to live the values of the gospel and to proclaim it in our attitudes, our actions. We must stand up against the forces that attack the kingdom and strive courageously for justice and peace. Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us now and always, as we proclaim *Viva Cristo Rey!*