

Feast of Christ the King

Cycle B, 11.25.18

Daniel 7:13-14/Revelation 1:5-8/John 18:33-37

GONNA LAY MY BURDENS DOWN

We come to Mass for a lot of different reasons, don't we? It's almost as though we come through the doors like school kids trudging into school on a Monday morning. You know how kids lug back packs crammed full of books, notebooks and homework.



Well, instead of carrying back packs full of books and homework, we carry... other things. We haul into church—all of us here today — bundles of worries and concerns and preoccupations. And that's true not only here in our church, but in every church throughout the diocese and everywhere else.

It's not hard to imagine, at the door of some church up north in Butte County, a father whose home was preserved during the fires touching his hand to the holy water, grateful for the rain that helped to bring the containment to ninety-five percent of the fires. It's not hard to imagine a woman, genuflecting in the aisle and feeling the ache in her knees, knowing that she has to have surgery in the near future for a joint replacement. Her body's telling her she's going to have to ease up on work but her financial burdens won't let her.

Or a mother opens the door in the back of the church with a child in her arms, having to worry about the child she's raising, while filled with anxiety about her own mother who has Alzheimer's and is soon going to need fulltime care. Likewise, a grandmother hurries through the last decade of her rosary before the opening song begins... a rosary prayed for a grandson having difficulty adjusting to college.

Should we go on? Should we unpack a few more of the burdens from the backpacks we carry? Shall we mention a fifth grade boy who sits in the pew with a sullen expression on his face because a bully in his class at school has chosen him as his target? Shall we mention the teenager who's praying that her parents quit their arguing for just a week? Heck, just a day?



These are among the reasons we come to Mass. But these aren't the only reasons we come to Mass. If we listened closely to the readings today, we realize that we also come to Mass to pay homage to Christ our King. In the book of Revelation, we read: *"To Jesus Christ... who loves us and who has freed us from our sins by the blood of his cross... to him be glory and power forever and ever."* *"To him be glory and power!"* That phrase means that the power of Christ is active today. It means that the power of Christ is stronger than any worry we carry or any tribulation we face.

It means that Christ hears the prayers of the grandmother for her troubled grandson. It means Christ is concerned about the financial condition of the worker with health problems, and the emotional condition of the kid who is bullied, and the domestic condition of the woman who's afraid of her husband, and the physical condition of the millions of children who will go to bed hungry tonight.

And this is the real reason we come to Mass. We come to Mass because it's the most effective means available to access the power of God. We believe the Mass is the greatest prayer on earth and the most powerful prayer in heaven.

So, consider the power of God for just a moment. The power of God is a very unusual power. The power of One who entered into the dimensions of time and space as a helpless infant... so that humanity would never again be afraid to look upon the face of God. Such is the power of the powerful God. The power that whirled the galaxies into existence, is now cradled in the palms of our hands under the appearance of ordinary bread and a sip of wine. Why? So that humanity would never again consider God unapproachable, much less, untouchable.



We come to Mass and realize anew that the God of all history, yes, the God of all power, walked on our dusty roads and worked as a carpenter. He hauled in fish from the sea and assured us that no sparrow falls from the sky, no lamb gets lost in a pasture, no prodigal son runs away from home without our loving God knowing all about it.

We come to Mass knowing that, in Jesus, God himself died for us. And, in some unexplainable way, we realize that this offering of love for a sinful and broken-down world will somehow, someday make everything right. Such is the power of our powerful God. We don't know the day, We don't know the hour, But we know the power... The power of God's love Here, in this church today, that awesome power becomes as clear as day, as tangible as bread. So, it's only natural that we unshoulder our backpacks and place our burdens at the altar, knowing that, in God's good time, in God's good way, the day of the Lord will take hold.



Someday, the lion will lie down with the lamb, and terrorists will abandon their bombs. The truth will be told, as surely as it was when Jesus stood before Pilate as God's faithful witness to the truth of all ages. Splendor and power were not in the heart of Jesus as he stood his trial before earthly rulers, but compassion and mercy, justice and love.

The sick will be healed,
the lost will be found,
the hungry will be fed,



The power of God...
In God's good time...
In God's good way.

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