

Homily Helps – October 15, 2023
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
One week until Mission Sunday

Five weeks from today the Church will celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, and the kind of kingship we celebrate on this feast is radically different than the way our world normally understands power and authority. Christ was a king who came to serve - his throne was a cross, his crown made not of gold but of thorns, and his regal garments that of his very blood.

With this kind of kingship in mind, today's readings from the prophet Isaiah and St. Matthew each in their own way begin to describe the new way of being Jesus' kingship has inaugurated into the world. Unlike typical kingships in the world, in Christ's kingdom, all will be well provided for, or as Isaiah so beautifully phrases it, all will be fed with "juicy, rich food and pure choice wines." But to accept the Lord's invitation to become guests at this sumptuous feast at which he is the host, we must first recognize our hunger and a willingness to be fed and transformed, especially by how we choose to live our daily lives now rooted in him and his example of a self-sacrificing life of service.

Then amid this reflection on the kingdom Christ invites us to enter, St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians writes of the sustenance and strength he receives from his relationship with Christ, which enables him to meet the challenges he faces each day and cope with every circumstance, in feast or famine. This example of St. Paul can encourage us as we too strive to remain faithful to our commitment as Christians amidst the trials and misfortunes that vex us all.

For us here in the United States, invitations to this wedding banquet, invitations to find salvation in Christ by our baptism into the Church, and a full life as a committed Catholic have come to us thanks to the first missionaries who came to these lands centuries ago. This invitation has been then extended down the years by the lives and good example of countless Catholic men and women, including so many fine priests, Religious sisters and brothers, parents, and educators.

But just like the king in today's parable who extended his welcome to people who formerly were left off the invitation list, the Church continues the task of sending out and supporting missionaries to bring the Gospel to people who have yet to know of Christ and his invitation to his divine banquet.

As we approach World Mission Sunday (October 22), may we both be inspired by the heroic example of the missionaries who brought the faith to us here in America, as well as be mindful of our obligation to spread the Gospel so that all know that they are invited to the heavenly banquet at which Christ is both the host and the food itself in the sacrament of his Body and Blood.

