

## **11/22/15 ..... Christ the King B**

*My kingdom does not belong to this world.*

-- Jesus says this when Pilate, the Roman governor, asks him whether he is the King of the Jews. Pilate is thinking of kingship in terms of human power and the ability to enforce your will, by violence if necessary.

-- Jesus is not that type of king. The ways of the world are not his, in the first or the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Jesus came to usher in a new type of kingdom: one where justice and love are not in conflict; one where comfort in this life is not more important than hope for eternal life.

-- Jesus came to establish the new kingdom of God and, as I said last week, in one sense it's already here. Jesus has triumphed over sin and has won the victory. But in another sense it's still far away. The reign of justice and love is not fully established on earth. We are still in pain.

-- Paris was reminded of that fact nine days ago, as the coordinated terror attacks took place. St. Caspar's parish was reminded of that this past Wednesday when, in the space of 13 hours, we lost three of our very active parishioners: Lawrence Dieringer, Rose Wongroski, Tim Mielke.

-- Many of us (many of you) are still reeling from this parish mini-9/11. How can the good king described in the scriptures permit such suffering in so short a time? If Jesus is truly the victorious king why do we still have to go through so much pain?

-- We long for answers; we long for security in life. We may even be a bit angry when we feel God has abandoned us or at least taken a vacation. We may begin to think Christ the King is not protecting us.

-- But we all too easily forget that Christ is not a worldly king. Christ does not shelter us from suffering, but he walks through it with us. Christ does not immediately destroy those who do bad things; he invites them to repentance and us to a spirit of forgiveness.

-- We've had glimpses of that kingly leadership in tragedy in recent decades. In September, 1997, Queen Elizabeth spoke reassuringly to the

people of England following the death of Princess Diana. It took some convincing by family members and the Prime Minister for her to do this. But the country was better for it.

-- Christ the King needs no persuasion. He gratefully walks with us in sorrow. He carries the people of St. Caspar Parish in his heart as we work through this difficult time.

-- And Christ the King calls us to support one another in prayer. He may be calling some of you to take a part in bereavement ministry. Christ challenges us to give practical help to those in need because of loss or other type of suffering.

-- But he doesn't simply ask the members of our parish to support each other or those we know. He invites us to look outward to others in distress.

-- Our response as a nation to terror attacks overseas should not be to wall ourselves in. As history shows, walls never give permanent security. Those in genuine need, especially refugees who have been properly screened, should not be kept away out of fear.

-- Our parish needs to continue to reach out to those in need, whether or not they are members of our parish. I'm confident that will continue to happen, for we have a good tradition of this outreach.

-- Today we come to the table of the Lord to be fed with the bread of life as strength for our earthly journey. For many of you, it may be pretty hard at this time. We need the strength of the Eucharist, the very body and blood of Christ.

-- For the One who loves us and has freed us from our sin will continue to walk with us in our suffering, as he did with the early Christians. With that promise, we will one day participate in the heavenly liturgy that our departed parishioners now enjoy.