

There is a story by the English writer, Rudyard Kipling, called “The Man Who Would be King!” It’s interesting to contrast that with the story of Jesus, who was the man who wouldn’t be King!

In Kipling’s story, the man is an English soldier of fortune named Peachy Carnehan who travels into the back provinces of Afghanistan and through violence and luck convinces the tribes there that he is a King and a God. When it seems that he has everything he wants, they see him accidentally bleeding one day and decide he can’t be a God, just a man, so they turn on him and kill him.

In Jesus’ story, he sets out NOT to be King, but to be a servant of all, and even refuses to be made King when the people try, but the people are afraid of Him and what he represents, they don’t believe he is a God either, so they turn on him and kill him.

The difference is Jesus fulfilled his promise and came back from the dead, but poor Peachy did not.

Pope Francis recently talked about the difference between God’s Kingdom and earthly kingdoms. He said, “The kingdoms of this world sometimes build themselves on arrogance, rivalry, oppression; the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

“To reign as Jesus does means to serve God and one another – a service that flows from love: to serve for love’s sake is to reign: this is the regality of Jesus.”

The comedian Mel Brooks made a film called, “The History of the World” and in it he sings a rap song as Louis XVI, called “It’s Good to be King.”

It has lyrics like, “Now in 1789, the peasants were starving but I was fine, In the alleys of Paris they were eating rats, but it was Filet and Wins for the aristocrats!”

This was a satire about eighteen century France and how terrible the ruling class was then, but look around and a lot of that is still true for us today. Louis XVI hid in a castle while the people around him starved, we hide in a big North American cities while the world around us starves.

If the King is glorious and perfect and if they represent us, then we can feel like we are part of something bigger, perfect and glorious, better than others. Why must we be better than others instead of simply being happy with who we are, as God made us, and rejoicing in the way God made others as well.

Why must I be better than you, my dad can beat up your dad, my country richer than your country, my ruler stronger than your ruler, my way of life is good – your way of life is bad. This only leads to jealousy, competition, struggle, oppression, nationalism and war, as Pope Francis warns us.

The true King came to rule all the nations, not just ours, he came to unite all peoples as sisters and brothers not as separate races and colours and countries, he came to make the whole world special, not just certain individual countries.

The book of Daniel describes many Kingdoms ruled by beasts but in today's reading we hear that the only ruler whose Kingdom was forever was the one who was like a Son of Man, a human being, Jesus.

And the reading from Revelation says that Jesus is ruler of all the Kings, the ruler who loves us and frees us, he doesn't enslave us.

The people of Israel asked God for a King because they thought they would get security that way. The so-called order and security promised by earthly powers, whether you call them Kings or Presidents or Prime Ministers today demands great sacrifices of our goods and our freedom and our lives for a promise they can never fulfill because it is always based on earthly power and fear, on trying to hold on to something for themselves, not on sharing, sacrifice and love.

And though people have been trying for thousands of years, there has never been a kingdom or a nation that has achieved true peace and security, only short periods where there was no open fighting. Short periods which seem to break down within a few years. Don't you think its time to give God's way a chance and turn ourselves over to Jesus?

Christmas is coming, the birth of the King who never used the word for himself.

When Pilot asks Jesus if he is a king, He doesn't say yes but he does refer to his Kingdom, not as a kingdom of power but of truth. Modern kingdoms hate the truth, information is classified, only the special ones are allowed to know things.

Kings and rulers are Human and they are weak and like all of us, they are sinners, but they want us to believe they are perfect and see them only in glory and hide away all the failures, when we know only Jesus will come in true glory.

If we want to have membership in heaven's kingdom, then we are called to understand that our actions are the visible proof of our membership.

Whenever we are about to act or make an important decision, we can ask ourselves, "Does my action help bring about the Kingdom of Christ or does it make me more like a King? Will what I am about to do serve others or will it force others to serve me?"

In this way we will live the Gospel as citizens of God's Kingdom. One of the biggest barriers to living by the words of the Gospel is that so many people don't believe it is really possible to do it. What can we do, by the way we live, to convince others that it is possible?

If you don't believe it's possible, then that's the place to start. Receive Jesus in the Holy Communion, hold Him close inside of you and ask him to increase your faith so that you don't simply believe in Him, but that you believe that what he taught and promised can really happen.

Then we will have the strength to change the way we behave and the goals we set for our lives. That will lead to change in our family, then in our parish, then in our community and perhaps in the whole country and even in the whole world.

Jesus taught us that the King is the one who serves best.

We have many opportunities to serve others through Parish organizations like the Catholic Women's League, the Knight's of Columbus, the Saint Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary, Development and Peace and many others listed right there on the front of our weekly bulletin.

People always change at Christmas, so this reminder about the Kingship of Christ is appropriate just before we celebrate his birth so that we keep that birth in perspective about what's really important.

At Christmas time we can be swept up by the emotion of the moment and we change for the better for a little while. Think about each action you take during this time and pray for the changes to be permanent.

This isn't some hope for the future; Christ is our King now. He was the King who chose not to rule but to serve, and so we too must strive not to be served but to serve each other.