

[Readings: Ezekiel 34: 11-17; Psalm 23; I Cor 15:20-28; Matthew 25:31-46]

In general, there are two ways that we can approach life. Two very simple ways, “My Kingdom come, my will be done,” or “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.” I don’t know about you, but in my 69 years, I have tried to approach life a lot as “My kingdom come, my will be done.” I have learned that any time I do that, life gets pretty frustrating. Life can be pretty miserable when we constantly want to have life on our terms. The sad thing is, when we try to have life on our terms, the vision to the kingdom, my kingdom, is so small to what God wants His Kingdom to be in our world.

We have two ways to approach suffering as well. The reality is, we all experience suffering in this life. I want you to think about that. Are you experiencing any suffering right now? It could be anything: emotional, physical, spiritual, relationships, family, or friendships. Are you experiencing any suffering? There are two ways to approach it, “My will be done, my kingdom come,” or “Thy will be done come, Thy Kingdom come.” Think about that for a moment. Then also think about what we are celebrating today.

Today is the 34th Sunday in Ordinary Time. This last Sunday of Ordinary Time is also called the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe. The First Reading from the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel pre-figures Jesus as the Good Shepherd. “I myself will look after and tend my sheep.”

The Second Reading from the New Testament First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians makes reference to the Eternal Kingdom Jesus Christ will establish for all people for all time. The last thing to be subject is death. Then He will return all things seen and unseen back to the Father. All will be in Him.

The Gospel for today’s feast challenges us as to whether we are the fit or unfit servants of the King of the Universe. How do WE proclaim the Kingdom of God by our thoughts, words and deeds? We will have to stand in judgement before the King of the Universe and face the consequences of our choices and our behavior on earth. “Whatever you did to my least ones, you did it to Me.”

God has it all. He is King of it all. He is in control of it all.

But notice that today's Gospel, although Jesus is throned in all of his glory, He measures our lives by humility and service. It is not worldly might and power that will get us into Heaven, but spiritual humility and worldly service "Whatever you did to one of my least ones, you did it to ME."

In the meantime, how do we handle our day-to-day minor and major problems? Your problems are not really that big when it comes to God. My problems, when it comes to God, are really not that big. God can handle them. He has the whole universe to handle. He can handle your problems. He can handle my problems. Just think about that. Whatever your problems are, whatever your struggles are, whatever your issues are, the King can handle it. He's got your back. As we learned last Sunday, God has given us all different talents. God does help us use those talents to get us through life. The difficulties come when we try to do life on our own terms or by ourselves.

There is a prayer I learned many years ago. It is one of the three prayers I pray before leaving the man-cave at the rectory: "Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today, that together, you and I can't handle." Whatever you are suffering right now, whatever your struggles, whatever your difficulties are, that is your cross. You did not get to choose it, but you are nailed to it. You have two ways of approaching it. "Lord get me down from this cross, save me." "My will be done, my kingdom come." Or, on the other hand, accept it, "Your will be done. Your Kingdom come." Blessed Solanus Casey puts it this way: "Let us thank God at all times and under whatever circumstances. Thank Him for our creation and our existence, thank Him for everything -- for His plans in the past that by our sins and our lack of appreciation and patience have so often been frustrated and that He so often found necessary to change. Let us thank Him for all His plans for the future -- for trials and humiliations as well as great joys and consolations; for sickness and whatever death He may design to plan... Thank God ahead of time for whatever He foresees." AMEN!