Serving Our King

Sunday Homily | Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

We come to the end of the liturgical year and we celebrate Christ the King, who is King over all things, King over creation, King of the universe. And we hear He is our King, we hear that we are the sheep and He is our shepherd, but I think it also, we don't get to just say, well, I'm sheep, I'm waiting for my direction. He's given it to us. We hear in that gospel what we are supposed to do. take care of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned, the ill. So I like to go a little more active in who we are. And we are not too far out from Halloween, and I remember at least two or three years, if not more, I went for Halloween as Robin Hood. I had my little suction cup bow and arrow that I got taken away just as often as I had it probably, because shooting siblings and others, but it's because I loved the Robin Hood movies. I grew up with the Disney Robin Hood where he's the fox and everyone's the animals and then as I got a little older they had the Kevin Costner Robin Hood Prince of Thieves which I thought was amazing as a little kid and now I look back and it's a little cheesy. But the core of the story is a great one. Robin Hood is standing up for those who cannot take care of themselves. That the sheriff of Nottingham and the evil prince saw

The king is away, and so what do they do? They take the power. Not to take care of people, but rather to abuse the system so that they can take whatever they want, so that they can raise taxes, oppress the people, kick out who they don't want, disappear who they don't like, and make the world as they want it. Robin Hood and his band of merry men fight back not because they want to be in charge. They do it first. for justice, to take care of the people who cannot take care of themselves and what do they do? We see them feeding the hungry, giving money to the poor, giving housing and a place to live to those who have nothing. But again, the end goal for them is not and we can take over and we can be in charge and everything will be right. What is the end goal in Robin Hood? Is we wait until the rightful king returns who will set. things right.

We are Robin Hood and his merry men, we are the ones who are waiting for the return of our king to come and set everything right. And it doesn't take too much of looking around to see those who act like the sheriff of Nottingham, those who act like Prince John and say, oh, you know what? This world is for me. I can do what I want. I can take that power and make the world what I want it to be. And whenever. humanity does that, the ones who suffer are the poor, the needy, those who are not strong or powerful enough to take care of themselves. Now Robin Hood and the stories was not a peasant. He was actually a well-to-do. He was an aristocrat. He had titles. He could have joined up and said, hey, you guys got a good thing going. I'm going to live with you. I'm going to live in your kingdom. and live in comfort, but instead he chose to live in the woods in discomfort to bring the justice he could to take care of the people he could to serve his king until his king returned.

There are many of us who can live perfectly comfortable lives, who can take more or less what we want. Governments change, presidents change. A lot of it doesn't matter so much. We can take advantage of those systems, and it's very easy to look at those without and say, well, they did something wrong. They

just worked harder. If they just tried a little harder, if they just talk to right people, they would be just fine. So it's their own fault. Then we can instead look as Christ asks us to. What am I able to do? I think our community's a great start. If you look in the hall right now, and even if you don't have donations, I invite you on the way out to look at what our parish hall looks like right now. It is filled with donations, with food, with gifts, with books, with things for those who are in need. I said it's wonderful, but it's a great start. And we don't just go, eh.

I donated there, I'm good for the year. It's something that we're constantly called to see because when we serve our King, it is not just when we serve the poor, the needy, the hungry, the imprisoned, the without homes, that we are serving him in an abstract way. What Christ tells us is when you take care of them, you take care of me. That it is actually giving our King food. It is giving our King what he needs. to live because he dwells in us, because he has asked us to take care of him in those who are in need because that is who Christ dwelt with. Remember, Christ is God. He could have come to this world as a king and been in power and comfortable and everything great, but that is not why he, where or how he chose to live. Why? Because he lived among those who were in need. He lived among those who needed. food for that day, who needed healing, not just to be healthy, but to be able to get back to work, to supply for their families. He taught those who would not have access to those great teachers all the time. That is the way he lived, and that's what he called his followers too. And so it's that difficult thing that he, in calling us, is saying, don't get too comfortable. Robin Hood and his men lived out in the woods.

planning all these things, taking care of other people. We're called sometimes to take care of others to the point of discomfort to ourselves. We don't like to admit that because I like being comfortable. I like having everything I need. And I can come up with a lot of good excuses why I can't help someone today, why I don't have what I need to help them right now. But then do we change? Do we plan ahead? Something is simple. Something as simple as keeping a pack of granola bars and a pack of water in your back seat so that when you see someone in need, you can say, hey, it's not a lot, but it's something to show them not only, hey, a little bit of kindness in that food, but also to show that I'm just not going to ignore you like so many other people. If they don't want it, if they don't need it, that's on them. But to be able to offer something. If you're like me, you eat those granola bars a lot and then you have to buy more so you have them in the car. But it's about preparing to help. It's about looking for those opportunities because the truth is we can't help everyone. It's kind of the neat part of a global society is we see the whole world but that also we can know, you know what, I'm never going to be able to help those people who are hurt in other countries and other places that are hidden here and there and sometimes it just makes us shut down and say if I can't

change the world, I'm just going to tune it all out. That's not good either. And we might not be able to change the world, but we can help a person. We can make small changes. We can be in kindness and love to our neighbor, to those who are in need, and be ready and looking for ways to help them. That's where we come back to Robin Hood, because they weren't Robin Hood and his band of really complaining, not-so-good-mood people. They were his merry men. Because even living without, even living in the woods, even being kind of thrown outcasts from society, there is joy there, why? Because they are serving their King, because they are doing the right thing, because in that companionship in the community that

they have made to do that right thing, they find joy. It's why Christ calls us together, not only to receive him in the Eucharist but to be united with our brothers and sisters here. This isn't supposed to just be a place where you see one or two people and say hi. It's a place where we are truly supposed to be. Brother and sister, be the body of Christ. Be that merry band who supports one another and finds joy in the other. Not, that person took the last parking spot, how dare they. But that person is here. I am here. We're all here.

to follow the Lord, to wait for the return of our King to set all things right. And Christ didn't leave to fight on the Crusades, rather, he died so that we can live. And then he goes to prepare a place for us in heaven, and that is what we get ready for. That world, a new heaven and a new earth when the King comes and sets things right. But when he comes, what we heard in that gospel, and separates the goats and the sheep, how does he decide? Well, who took care of those who are in need? Who took care of me in all of those times? And we can't wait till the last second and try our best to hopefully do enough. We have to be living to make the kingdom. We can't come Sunday to the kingdom of God and then live the rest of the week in someone else's kingdom by someone else's rules, happy with however they rule. We have to bring that kingdom of God to all of creation. Because that is his kingdom. That is what belongs to him. But so many do not know it. They've given up in the broken systems of those who have done their best. And I'm not saying that there aren't places better than others. I do love our country. I think we do great things, but it's not perfect. It doesn't matter how great of a president we get. He's never going to make it perfect. Doesn't matter how bad of a president we get. He's not going to end things. We know how things end. They end.

with the return of our King to set things right. What will we find when he comes? We wait with anticipation. We don't just wait. We do our best to make this kingdom his, to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves, to join in that community of merry men, of people joyfully serving our King even when he is not here, so that when he returns, He will find those loyal servants. He will find the kingdom that he left and people who continue to wait for his return and then give those rewards for those who have waited and acted in his place. Amen.