

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

November 24, 2019



Christ the King Sunday

Pope Pius XI declared for the good of the Catholic faithful the Solemnity of Christ the King on December 11, 1925. Having lived through the horrors of the 1st World War and encountering the destruction of human life on a large scale, Pope Pius XI could see the formation of strong and evil influences within Europe rising again. In order to quell the forces of evil and the destructive dictators and rulers of the day he came to a conclusion in prayer, namely, we need Jesus Christ to be boldly proclaimed as the King of kings and Lord of lords. As Pope Pius XI wrote, "When we pay honor to the princely dignity of Christ, men will doubtless be reminded that the Church, founded by Christ as a perfect society, has a natural and inalienable right to perfect freedom and immunity from the power of the state; and that in fulfilling the task committed to her by God of teaching, ruling, and guiding to eternal bliss those who belong to the kingdom of Christ, she cannot be subject to any external power (Quas Primas 31)." The late Holy Father's words hearken to the truth of Christian life, that Jesus must be number one in all that we do and say. We need to be guided by Jesus and to find our lives being directed and guided by Him. The love of Jesus must reign in our hearts and be the guiding principle that fuels our relationships and our attitudes about the world around us. Jesus has a kingdom, and that kingdom is heaven. Jesus has a throne, and that throne must be our hearts. Jesus you are the King of our lives, reign with your love and mercy in our hearts forever!

Remembering the Dead

Over the years as a priest I have visited numerous sick parishioners in many different facilities or homes across South-Central and Southeastern Minnesota. Some of the toughest visits I have made involve going to St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, MN and visiting the Francis building's 2nd or 3rd floors. Why are these visits hard? These are children's areas within the hospital. It is never easy to visit a sick and suffering adult, but it is really hard to visit a sick child. Several years ago I made numerous visits to that wing in the Francis building of St. Mary's Hospital to see a little boy named Miles. I baptized this boy one summer and by fall he started to get sick. His mom and dad were worried about him and didn't know what was going on so they brought him to the doctor who referred them to blood specialists. Soon after, this little boy was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). The parents took off work and devoted their lives to being with their son 24 hours a day. Extended family and community members like myself did all we could to boost up the morale of the family. Fundraisers were held and special

events took place including one from the Make-A-Wish Foundation. After about a year of doctor's visits and chemotherapy and other treatments, the doctors called the family together and said that Miles had gotten resistant to the treatments and that there was nothing they could do to make him better. These are the words

no parent wants to hear. I remember visiting with the boy's father that day, and I can still hear his voice, "There is nothing else they can do for my son. He is going to die." We prayed. We cried. We talked. Maybe you have had an experience like this, I had not. Not involving a child. After about a year and two months since the initial diagnosis, this little boy breathed his last. He died with his father holding him while sleeping. I remember playing guns with Miles and running around the living room about a week after he got to go home for good. After playing we said a prayer and I asked him if he wanted to see Jesus some day? He smiled and said shyly, "Yes." My heart remembers these moments still with great tenderness. Some of you may have lost a child and/or known someone else who lost one or seen someone else whom you love die, though death is difficult we are people of faith and we put our trust in Jesus Christ. He has won the victory over sin and the grave through His death and resurrection and for that triumph we give thanks. As we conclude this month of the Holy Souls we pray:

Eternal rest grant unto them O, Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

Advent is Near

Next week begins the season of Advent. This is the sacred time of year where the Church participates in the great preparation of the coming of our Immanuel to earth. During this season there will be added times for Confession and prayer that all of us may prepare our hearts fully for the Christmas Sacrament. Begin asking the Lord how He wants this special season to be for you. Extra prayer time, a rosary a day, daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, morning Scripture readings, serving the poor, or other ideas that the Lord is inviting you to participate in this Advent. Let this be the best Advent ever, because Christ is at the center of your life.

Thanksgiving

There is much to be thankful for during this Thanksgiving season. Take some time individually to reflect upon the past year and to give thanks to God for the many blessings that have been received. Suggestion: during the Thanksgiving meal go around the table and allow everyone an opportunity to give thanks to God for something or someone.

With Gratitude and Thanks to God,

Fr. Tom Niehaus