

**Homily — Christ the King, 2018 (OT 34 B)
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

Many of you know that for the past several months
my life got turned up-side-down.
Earlier this past summer, I got a prostate cancer diagnosis.
At first, it didn't appear all that serious.
After surgery, it became clear that the cancer
had spread further than was first thought.
The after-effects of the surgery were not pretty.
Recovery took much longer than I was led to believe.
I faced moments of despondency, discouragement, huge impatience,
fear, anger and much more.
It was different that anything I had ever experienced in the past.

Now I tell you that not to elicit your sympathy
– even though I acknowledge not being above that.
I tell you that because I want to acknowledge
another dimension of this that, upon reflection,
came as something of a surprise.
Right along with the pain and uncertainty and fear,
there were moments of hilarious laughter and tears of joy.
There were feelings of being cared for by people
and a sense of being profoundly cared for by God.
All that left me at times in a state of sheer bliss and profound gratitude.

Why am I telling you this story?
Because I think it says something very important about the deeper meaning
of this, Christ the King Feast.

There are times when we all get trapped into thinking
that really having faith in Jesus Christ
ought to lead inevitably to happiness and peace.

We, pretty easily at times, have a tendency to say to ourselves,
"If I'm not happy, maybe I have no faith, or I've lost my faith."

There was a Jesuit priest named Avery Dulles, who late in his life
was named a cardinal.
He was the son of a famous American statesman, John Foster Dulles.
Very wisely Rev. Dulles once said, "Christianity does not give you a ladder
to crawl out of the human condition, but a drill to burrow into the heart of it.
He said that true faith allows us to stand inside of every reality in life,
positive and negative, and see some meaning in it ...
Life, he insisted, is "shimmering with divinity."

The question we ought to be asking is not so much, "do I have faith?"
The real question becomes, "Is my faith deep enough so that
every corner of my experience, no matter how painful makes some sense

in a higher plan?"

The important question for us all ought not to be "am I really happy?"
The important question ought to be "is my life meaningful?"

In our first reading the prophet Daniel insists
the dominion of the one he calls "the human one"
is an everlasting one that shall NOT be taken away or destroyed.
Faith is the willingness to live like that's really true.

Jesus says in the Gospel, "Everyone committed to the truth hears my voice."
The TRUTH IS that God can be counted on
and Jesus is that TRUTH incarnate, in the flesh.
Faith is trusting in that truth.

Earlier in Mass, I noted that there is and there are many
claiming our allegiance and loyalty.
There is a version of the Eucharistic prayer that boldly announces
that though many claim our loyalty, our allegiance,
God has exalted JESUS as the true and only KING of creation,
NOT Caesar, or the president
or any other person who holds "power" over us.

In that same version of the Eucharistic prayer we beg God
to "awaken to the undying light of pardon and peace
those fallen asleep in peace,
and those who have died alone, unloved and unmourned."
We've been praying for, and with, all of them this month.

To return to where we began —
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