

Christ the King

In his book, *The Christian Legend*, John Powell recalls an old Irish legend that goes back to the time when kings ruled Ireland. The reigning king had no children to succeed him on the throne. So he ordered signs to be posted in every town and village inviting qualified young men to apply for an interview with the king. 2 qualifications were stressed – a deep love for God and for neighbor.

The young man of the legend saw one of the signs and felt a kind of inner voice telling him to apply for an interview. His immediate problem was his poverty; he had no decent clothes to wear in such an interview and no provisions for the long journey to the king's castle.

Finally, he begged for both and when all was ready set out. After a month of travel, he was within sight of the castle. But at about the same time, he also saw a poor old beggar sitting by the side of the road. The beggar held out his hands and pleaded for help. He was hungry and cold.

The young man was moved by the sight of the beggar...so much so that he exchanged his own warm coat for the tattered old coat of the beggar, and also gave him most of the provisions he had been carrying for his return trip.

Somewhat uncertainly, the young man continued his trip to the castle in tattered clothes. He was led in to the king, bowed low before the throne, then straightened up to notice that the king was the beggar he had met along the road.

“Why did you do this to me?” asked the young man.

“I had to find out,” said the king, “if you really do love God and neighbor.”

The reign of Christ begins when we see one another as Christ, our King. The true value of every human life is the light that God kindles within each of us. Our value is found in God's love for us. Matthew 25, Jesus parable in today's Gospel challenges us to see one another in that light; to look deeper than the externals of race, nationality, culture and language in order to behold the love of God animating in us, on whom God has breathed his love and life.

What Christ wants to know is if we really do love God and our neighbor and self. We're all tied together in faith.