

HOMILY CHRIST THE KING YRA 2017

Attorney Kenneth Feinberg was one of the people responsible for the Federal September 11 Victim Compensation Fund. He had to determine the amount of money to be distributed to the families of those who lost their lives. The money was not distributed evenly to everyone. He had to put a value on each life. The value was based upon things such as age, dependents, financial assets, and earning potential. Compensation ranged from \$250,000 to \$7 million. It somehow did not seem right to him to place a value on each life based upon these factors. The family of the first responder close to retirement age would get way less than the young CEO. It seems that each life should have equal value.

God values each of us equally. We are all God's favorites. God delights in each one of us. Sometimes we forget that we are all part of the body of Christ and God dwells in each of us, which gives each of us equal value in God's eyes. In the Gospel reading Jesus tells us "whatever you did for the least of the brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me." Who are the least of the brothers and sisters? Jesus is not referring to a generic least. We sometimes have a stereotype of the least among us, maybe the homeless, the convicted criminals. Sometimes we see the poor and the criminals as somehow having less value than the rest of us. That is not the way that God sees us, and that is not the way God wants us to treat others. Sometimes we judge the poor as being lazy, not wanting to work, not able to take care of themselves. Well, who among us have not been lazy, not wanting to work, not wanting to take care of ourselves at times? How about convicted criminals? After all they did commit a crime. How many of us have not broken the law at least one time in our lives. Maybe we were never convicted because we never got caught. Maybe we have never lived in an environment that led us to commit a particular crime. The reason I am not poor or homeless or in prison has a lot to do with my faith,

God and the advantages I have had in life and the people I have had in my life to love me and help me. My life has not all been easy. I have had some rough spots. Without the advantages I have had, without the people that I have had in my life who love me, I could very well have ended up poor or homeless or in prison. We have all been among the least of the brothers or sisters at least once in our lives. I think we move in and out of that category at different points in our lives. The least brothers or sisters of mine are anyone around us who is need. We need to do less judging and more helping.

Today we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. This image of Jesus sitting on a throne in heaven has never resonated with me. Jesus chose to be born into poverty and to live among the least brothers and sisters of mine. Jesus is king in the sense that he has power over all of his creation, but he does not live as we expect royalty to live. Jesus has chosen to live in each one of us and is with us caring for us when we are one of the least brothers or sisters of mine.

Today, in the Gospel reading Jesus is talking about the end times, the end of the earth or our own death, whichever is sooner. He tells us what is on the final exam. Mother Theresa once said: "You can sum up the Gospel in five words. You did it for me." All of our faith, our prayer, our bible study, our coming to church on Sundays, all of our spiritual practices should be focused upon better loving and serving the people in our lives. Faith, spiritual practices without acts are empty. Jesus lives in all of us and when one of us hurts we all hurt. All of us are the least brothers or sisters of mine at one point or another. We are all equal in God's eyes. We are all in this together, and need to help each other. We need to look for Jesus in everyone we meet.