



## Catholic Church and School

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I went to a kingdom one time. It was a magic kingdom. It was Disney's Magic Kingdom. Any Mickey Mouse or Minnie Mouse fans out there? You get on the bus in the huge parking lot in order to get to the kingdom more quickly. The driver tells you, "You're going to have a magical day."

As you walk down Main Street there are well-dressed, good-looking young people to take care of you and, if you drop a candy wrapper on the ground, someone "magically" appears with a little dustpan and broom to sweep it up. Occasionally a voice on the loudspeaker reminds you, "You're having a magical day."

There aren't any delivery trucks there. Instead there are underground tunnels, so that everything you want just "magically" appears – food and souvenirs. People too can be whisked away underground if they feel faint or sick from the heat or the Buzz Lightyear roller coaster or the Little Mermaid twisting, turning Water Slide. People are taken away underground so as not to bother anyone or spoil anyone's magical day.

You don't have to wait for other people if you don't want to. You can buy a FastPass in order to minimize the time you spend waiting with other people. Everything is nice and pretty without any waiting in the Magic Kingdom. When you leave Disney at the end of the day the voice reminds you again, "You had a magical day."

But there are some problems in the "Magic Kingdom". The "Magic Kingdom" isn't real. There is no church on Main Street. Christ the King reminds us of the reality that God exists, and God is to be worshipped. What we are doing here and now is real. This Mass is not a fantasy vacation to temporarily get away from our everyday lives and selves and sins. This Mass is the real world that affects our everyday lives and allows us to love and to live and to give for the kingdom.

Christ the King offers a taste of His real, supernatural kingdom to us here and now through His Word and His Sacraments and His Teaching in His one, holy, Catholic, apostolic Church. This Mass is a dress rehearsal for "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and sits upon His glorious throne". This is the real life that we are called to live every day in a kingdom of communion with Christ and the people around us.

The Eucharist is a taste of the real, supernatural kingdom of God. It is Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. It doesn't get much more real than that. Eucharist leads us to love as God loves. Sometimes you see the warning on television, "Don't try this at home." Eucharist is just the opposite. The love of the Eucharist is meant to be taken home and given to others. Eucharist is the mirror that you look into with your life. It is the food that strengthens and perfects us to love and to live and to give ourselves for God's kingdom already here among us in everyday life.

Now everyday life isn't so "clean" as on Main Street. Bad things sometimes happen. Sometimes we do bad things. It is into our imperfect world that Christ our King came to

start the kingdom. The Gospel reminds us that Jesus came into a needy kingdom of hunger, thirst, loneliness, sinfulness. He came not as a King to gain from His kingdom but as a Servant to give to His Kingdom. Jesus came not to gain but to give. Oh, He could have come with a little wand that spilled stars all over the place but, instead, He came to serve. He came to sweep up the trash of our sins. He came to die.

That isn't very pretty. That isn't very magical. But that is reality.

The reality is that the final coming of Christ the King is a very long, slow process. We read elsewhere in the scriptures to consider God's delay as a patient waiting in order to give more time for more people to be saved. We begin Advent next week as a season of waiting patiently for Christ the King. There is no FastPass to our heavenly kingdom.

So what are we doing while we are waiting? Are we inviting others to join us in the kingdom? Or are waiting in those underground tunnels, keeping our faith hidden underground so as not to "bother" anyone?

We should not be afraid to bow our heads in public for a moment of thanksgiving to God for our food. And why don't we make the Sign of the Cross in public before a big test or meeting or a difficult task. Baseball players do it all the time right before they strike out.

#### Opportunities

In the coming weeks you will have many opportunities to be generous and to help those who are hungry and thirsty and in need. There are many charitable organizations that seek donations at this time of the year, so be open to helping them as they help those in need. The Gospel specifically mentions our actions toward the poor as a basis of judgment.

You will also have more opportunities to be around your family members during the holidays beginning with Thanksgiving and Christmas. Use those times to invite people to the kingdom. Ask them about their blessings from the past year. What are they thankful for? Then tell them where those blessings came from. Tell them about your blessings this year. What are you thankful for? Let them know where those blessings come from.

Speak to them about attending Mass and invite them to Christmas Mass – one of the times when people are very open to attending Mass and worshipping Christ the King. Christ the King is asking you to build His kingdom. Start with the kingdom of your own home and family.

Finally, the Diocese will be airing advertisements during Christmas from a group called "Catholics Come Home". It may be a chance to discuss the faith with others around you who see the commercials, so be prepared to invite people to the Church. Christ the King is asking us to do something for His kingdom as we await His return.

*Fr. David Ruppert at St. Anthony de Padua Church, South Bend, Indiana  
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