

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Are you up to some more “Kid Wisdom”? Some of our older kids shared their thoughts on love and marriage. A fifth grade boy when asked how do you decide who to marry answered this way, “You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.” A girl in the same class was more theological. She said, “No one really decides before they grow up who they’re going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you’re stuck with.”

A third grade boy said, when asked “How can a stranger tell if two people are married?” “You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids”.

Girls and boys in second grade have different views on when it is okay to kiss someone. The young girl said, “When they’re rich”. A young man took a more legalistic view of the matter. He said, “The law says you have to be eighteen to kiss, so I wouldn’t want to mess with that.”

When asked if it is better to be single or married, a fourth grade girl gave this opinion, “It’s better for girls to be single, but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them.”

Finally, a very wise fifth grade boy responded to the question, “How would you make a marriage work?” with “Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a dump truck.”

Parents, it seems to me you have a whole lot of work to do in explaining these things to your kids.

That’s enough of that! The question before us today is “What do we mean when we proclaim that Jesus Christ is King?” The very notion of kingship is foreign to us Americans. But that’s okay since Jesus Himself explains to Pontius Pilate and to us, “My kingdom does not belong to this world...My kingdom is not here.” He then concludes, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate responds, “Truth! What does that mean?”

This is the real question for us today, isn’t it? In proclaiming that Jesus Christ is King, we are saying, not only that Jesus is first in our lives, but that we have given Him charge over our lives—in our relationships, on our jobs, in our schools, in our homes, with regard to our finances and all our possessions. Is that your truth?

Is it true that you seek to follow Jesus by loving one another as He has loved us; by giving sacrificially of yourself for the sake of others; by seeking to heal and comfort those who are suffering and broken-hearted; by forgiving others as He has forgiven you; by giving

generously of yourself, your time, your talents, and your treasure, not from your excess, but from your sustenance, to build up His Church and to care for the poor and needy; and, finally, by doing all of that, not to bring glory to yourself, but to glorify God? Is that your truth?

Today we celebrate the truth that Carly Imberowicz for whom we celebrate today's Mass and Daulton Pointek at seventeen when they went home to the Lord have fulfilled their destiny in being reunited with God in his heavenly kingdom. This truth got me to pondering my own truth that began at seventeen years of age when I had to decide what I was going to do with my life. Back then, my parents explained to me that when I graduated from high school, I would either have to get a job and move out on my own; go in the military; or to continue my education, which I would have to pay for myself because they couldn't afford to send me to college. They weren't being mean or anything. That's just what was expected of young men back then.

So, I considered my options. I knew the military was out because I wasn't real good at taking orders. My Dad had to work at two jobs that he really didn't like just to take care of our family. I knew I didn't want to just take a job to survive. I thought about what I really wanted to do with my life and all I could come up with was that I wanted to spend my life helping others, but how? I considered business and finance, figuring I could become rich and help people with the money I made. But I thought I would be bored sitting in offices and meetings all day. I really wanted to be a doctor, but I didn't like the study of science. I considered being a teacher, but I really didn't like school all that much and couldn't see myself teaching other kids who probably didn't like school either. At my wits end, I finally decided to apply to LaSalle College and was accepted to study social work, but I really didn't know what social workers did. When I figured out that it would probably mean sitting in a government office, filling out a lot of paperwork that may or may not help the people I was serving, that became a less attractive future for me. What to do with the rest of my life?

Throughout all this time, I prayed a lot, asking God to help me figure out what I was going to do. I also read a lot. I read about a Doctor by the name of Tom Dooley who gave his life in taking care of poor people in Vietnam. I read about Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day. And I read Thosmas Merton's, "Seven Story Mountain". I read about some of the saints, like St. Francis and St. Ignatius. I started to read the Bible, especially drawn to the Acts of the Apostles. Slowly, gradually, I realized I wanted to give my life to serving as Christ served. The thought finally crossed my mind that maybe I could become a priest. But I knew that I wasn't that good, that holy, that righteous. I didn't think I even wanted to be that good, that holy, or that righteous.

I was sure I was neither acceptable, nor would be accepted by the Church to study for the priesthood. I didn't see myself as good enough. I don't think I even wanted to be that

good. So, finally, I said to God, “Well, if that’s what you want me to do, you’ll have to make it happen.” So, I applied, and was shocked when I was accepted. When I arrived at the Seminary and saw how good everyone else was and that it would take ten years of study before I could be ordained, once again I said to God, “I can’t do this. If this is what you want me to do with my life, you’ll have to make it happen”. Ten years later as I laid on the floor before the altar in the Cathedral, promising God I would serve as a priest for the rest of my life, I again told Him, “I’m not really sure I can do this the rest of my life. You’ll have to make it happen.”

To make a long story short, here I am 54 years since I first thought about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. My truth is that I decided to follow Jesus. I put him in charge of my life. I’ve messed up a lot along the way. I’ve had my ups and downs. I’ve come up short too many times to count; fallen and had to get back up way too often. I’ve wavered like Peter and doubted like Thomas. Still, since the Lord is in charge, He has used me to give sight to the blind; bring healing to the sick; comfort the grieving; forgive the penitent sinner; and make Him really present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, among his people and in the world. As to what I have acquired along the way, I’ve found that the more I give away, the more I am blessed. Truth be told, I am one of the top ten contributors to this parish, though my income is probably among the least. I say that, not with pride, but thanking God and rejoicing that I am able, and that God has put that desire in my heart. In fact, I feel blessed to say that, thanks be to God, my Lord and Savior, I am one of the happiest people on the face of the earth. Do you know anyone happier than me? My truth is “I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back! No turning back!” He is my King! He is my Lord! He is my Savior! He is everything to me! Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Lord, my King, My Savior! Thank You, Jesus!

That is my truth! But each of you have your own truth too. Wherever you find yourselves in life, when you put Jesus in charge of your life, He will make the improbable, probable; the impossible, possible. He will make a way where there is no way. He will open doors you can’t even see. I know so many of you are struggling with so much. You’re struggling to make ends meet; some are struggling in relationships; others with sickness; so many are grieving; still others on your jobs or in your schools. You too have difficult decisions to make for yourselves and for your families.

But I firmly believe with all of my heart what the Lord has done for me, he wants to do for you too. Put him first in your life. Let him take charge. Tell him, if you think he wants you to do something in your life; if he wants you to make a change in your life; even if he wants you to stop doing what you are doing that may be destructive in your life, to make it happen. I promise you that if you make him your King, your Lord, your Savior, that no matter what you are dealing with, your life will be filled with joy too and you’ll wind up outshouting me—THANK YOU, JESUS! THANK YOU, MY KING, MY LORD, MY SAVIOR! THANK YOU, JESUS!

If you have received that and believe it, will you join me now? If you're able, stand on your feet, claim it right now and shout with me. THANK YOU, JESUS! THANK YOU, MY KING, MY LORD, MY SAVIOR! THANK YOU, JESUS! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!