



Fr. J. Patrick Foley

Itinerant Papist Preacher

Retreat Ministry • Parish Missions

“Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile...” Mark 6:31
Are you ready to accept the invitation?

**The Itinerant’s Ramblings:
Christ The Disappointment**

November 24, 2007

Jesus certainly disappointed a lot of people. He disappointed the religious leaders of his time, who wanted a new King David to unify and strengthen all the people of Israel. He disappointed the Zealots, who fomented insurrection and longed for a military leader who could overthrow the Romans. He disappointed the Essenes, who desired a mystical leader who would keep them uninvolved in the messiness of the times. He disappointed his own family, who frankly thought he had lost his mind.

All of them wanted a Messiah, but a Messiah on their terms – and Jesus would not oblige. Some of them even wanted him to be king – and Jesus refused. The crime inscribed on his cross – The King of the Jews – was a title he never claimed.

And yet here we have this strange Feast of Christ the King.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to call it, The Feast of Christ the Disappointment.

Because he has disappointed us too, has he not? Is there any of us who has not begged God for this or that, only to be disappointed? Is there any of us who has not spared God the trouble of figuring out what is best for us, only to find God unconvinced by our arguments?

In fact, have there been any whom Jesus has not disappointed? Well, there are a few who come to mind:

- The sick whom he healed
- The hungry whom he fed
- The outcast whom he welcomed
- The lonely whom he befriended
- The sorrowing whom he comforted
- The sinful whom he forgave

And all of those who have searched for a way to live their lives that is worth their lives. Jesus showed them – us – how: by living your life in loving service of others. That’s how he lived; and that’s how all of us who follow him are called to live. Such a life is challenging and costly – as the great German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, it cost Jesus a criminal’s death on a cross – but such a life is not a disappointment, certainly not to Jesus. Rather, it is a discovery of what life is really meant to be.