ST ANN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
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The Way of Our King

Christ the King · Sunday 22 November 2026 · Matthew 25:31-46

My dear friends,

In his memoir *Moved by Love*, Vinoba Bhave, one of Gandhi's disciples, tells a story about a meal at Gandhi's ashram.

As a boy, Vinoba would eat almost anything his mother gave him. There was one exception. *Karela.* Bitter gourd. His mother teased him about it. He talked a great deal about self-control, but he wouldn't touch karela. Vinoba always had an answer. Surely a person could practise self-control and still have a few dislikes.

Years later, when he went to live at Gandhi's ashram, Vinoba decided to face those dislikes. He called Gandhi *Bapu*, an affectionate name meaning 'father'. One day, Bapu himself was serving the meal. And what did he put on Vinoba's plate? Karela.

'When Bapu himself was serving, how could I refuse it?' Vinoba recalls. So he ate the karela first, just to get it over with. Gandhi saw that his vegetable was gone and gave him some more. Vinoba said nothing and ate that too. By now Gandhi thought Vinoba must be particularly fond of it. So he gave him a **third helping**!

Looking back, Vinoba wrote, 'It was clear that I should have to give up my dislike of karela.'

It was still bitter gourd. And yet Vinoba's affection for Gandhi helped him accept something he had avoided since childhood. We know something of that in our own lives. **For someone we love, we do things we would never have chosen for ourselves.** Sometimes love asks us to give up something we enjoy. Sometimes it asks us to do something we've been avoiding.

Where I come from, we have a Tamil proverb.

அரசன் எவ்வழி, குடிகள் அவ்வழி.

The people follow the way of their king. And today we call Jesus our King. So what is his way?

Look at Jesus at the Last Supper. He gets up from the table, takes a towel and washes his disciples' feet. Look at him on the cross. He gives his life for the people he came to serve. As he tells his disciples, 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

In today's Gospel, that same King says, 'I was hungry and you gave me food.' And again, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.' The people are surprised. They remember feeding someone who was hungry or making room for a stranger. Now the King tells them who was there.
'You did it to me.'

Perhaps for us that means giving up part of a quiet evening to visit someone who spends most evenings alone. Perhaps it means putting down the phone when someone at home needs to talk. Or it may mean giving up the satisfaction of having the last word and being the first to say, 'I'm sorry.'

St John of the Cross put it simply. 'At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.'

As we come to Communion, let's bring to mind one person who could use a little more of our time or patience this week. Let's ask Christ what we can give up, or take on, for their sake.

The King who asks this of us is the King who first gave himself for us.

Amen.