

NOVEMBER 23 BISHOP TONY DANIELS

To be perfectly honest, I find this a bit of an uncomfortable feast, and I say that because, when I reflect on what Jesus himself said about his kingdom... it makes me wonder.

When Jesus was asked by Pilate, "Are you a king?" Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world." And that's so true. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, forgiveness, a kingdom of joy and celebration, a kingdom that celebrates the death of sin and the glory of life.

The kingdom of God is a kingdom about caring for one another, especially those who are most in need—caring for the vulnerable, the weak, the innocent. This is the kingdom of God. And I think I know why Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." When we look around our world, is this the kingdoms we see?

At the same time, when asked to teach his disciples how to pray, Jesus said, "When you pray, say this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.'" That prayer that we say all the time... we are asking that the kingdom of God become more and more a present reality in our world; that what separates our world, our nations, our peoples from the kingdom of God—that that separation will slowly dwindle, that the goodness of the kingdom of God will overcome the evil in our world.

And Jesus would not have asked us to pray for the coming of his kingdom if he himself was not going to make it possible for us to make a difference. And I think that's the real challenge of today's feast. It really is a feast of hope, and the hope lies in us—that how

we live, what we say, what we do, how we treat one another will manifest the kingdom of God a little more clearly.

And we urge those in leadership positions throughout the world to do what they can to make sure that the kingdom of God is the goal they desire and not the kingdom of this world.