I injured this right shoulder several weeks ago, and it's much better, but I can tell it still restricts my movement. When I first had a doctor look at it he told me it might be a rotary cuff injury. Well, I just beamed. When I think of rotary cuff I think of baseball pitchers. That's an injury you can take pride in. Anybody can break an arm or get a wart, but celebrities irritate rotary cuffs. Now I'm much less patient with my progress.

We have a third-grader in the parish who's home with Perthes disease. It attacks the veins in the hip, so he's been lying in bed in traction the last month, and will spend the next year and a half in leg braces. Now this is a disease that can restrict your movement. But I have never heard a patient describe his or her illness to me as peacefully as Justin did. He straightforward recognizes the inconvenience he'll face, but they could have coined the term "patient" by listening to Justin.

Two thieves on Calvary have seriously restricted their movement. It's not disease that restricts them, but punishment for their crimes. One has grown impatient and mocks this impotent God. The other accepts his sentence and looks for a brighter day. Jesus is innocent, but what restricts him is the people who reject his preaching and mission. Hanging on the cross, he looks like anything but Christ the King. Today in a city of drug dealers, racial tension, and record murders, we have crucified Jesus again; we have fixed his hands so he cannot act with power. When we restrict the power of Christ no one else can save us. Not even Superman, who died an untimely death on Wednesday. If Jesus is king, have we really made him ours?

You and I, we hang like thieves next to Jesus, immobilized by our society, by our sins and our stubbornness. These things crucify our faith, just as aches and pains crucify our body. Which thief will we be? The one who ridicules Christ for the mess we're in, and hurls abuse at others? Or the one who peacefully accepts the inconvenience and puts hope not in drugs, not in violence, not in pride, but in him whose nails can make us free: Christ the King?