

Homily of 34th Sunday, Christ the King of Year A

The kingship of Jesus is clearly stated in the Scripture:

- The King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).
- The ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5).
- He is the Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14).

The feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925, not long after the end of the First World War. The pope established the feast as a statement of faith against the prevailing ideologies of communism and secularism at that time. The two ideologies attempted to exclude faith, religion and God from humanity. This feast is even more relevant to us now that we face many anti-Christian and anti-Catholic ideologies like secularism, materialism, relativism, anti-clericalism, and persecution of Christians. By celebrating this feast we are upholding the teachings of the Scripture, the teachings of the Church and to continue to proclaim Jesus as our leader and king.

Jesus' disciples never understood his kingship until he ascended into heaven. On Jesus' last day with them they still asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Jesus had made it clear that his kingdom does not belong to this world (John 18:36). Jesus was not a political king, but a spiritual king. Jesus declared in Matthew 28:18, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me." In Philippians 2:9-10, St. Paul writes, "God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..." Jesus confers his power and authority to his followers by declaring in Luke 10:19, "Behold, I have given you the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you." It is with this spiritual power that we can witness Jesus to the world. Jesus says in Mark 16:17-18, "These signs will accompany those who believe in my name: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Jesus can only rule the universe through us if we take up this power and use it. It is with this power we are able to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and prisoners. It may be those physically hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick and in prison. But it may also be those who are spiritually bonded in these conditions. It is with this power that we can dispel the forces of darkness.

Jesus' kingship is a perfect example of shepherding, leading, and serving.

- Jesus teaches us to have close and healthy relationship with those we lead. He says, "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me" (John 10:14).

- Jesus teaches us to lead as servants. He says, “The greatest among you will be your servant” (Matthew 23:11).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with truth and justice. He says, “Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’ (Matthew 5:37). “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with mercy and compassion. He says, “Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:36).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with love. He says that love of God and love of neighbor are the greatest of all commandments (Mark 12:30-31).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with peace. He says, “Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house’” (Luke 10:5).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with forgiveness. On the cross he prayed for God’s forgiveness on all his adversaries (Luke 23:34). He says that if we forgive, we will be forgiven (Matthew 6:14).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with humility. He says, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with selfless commitment. He says, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me” (John 4:34). “Not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).
- Jesus teaches us to lead with self-sacrifice. He laid down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

Jesus is our king if we allow his teachings to rule our life. Worldly pressures notwithstanding, it is only through Jesus that everyone and the entire universe can experience the peace of God (Philippians 4:4-7). He is the way the truth and the life (John 14:16). Therefore, let us remain steadfast in following Jesus, our king, and the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)

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