

Homily of Thirty-Fourth Sunday (Christ the King) of Year B, 2021

Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 93:1-2,5; Revelation 1:5-8; John 18:33-37

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, and all manner of opposition to Christianity and persecution of Christians. By celebrating this feast, we are upholding the teachings of the Scripture and the teachings of the Church; and continue to proclaim Jesus Christ as our leader and king.

The Scripture testifies the kingship of Jesus:

- “Then Jesus approached his disciples and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matthew 28:18).
- “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...” (Philippians 2:9-10).
- The King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).
- The ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5).
- “The Alpha and the Omega” ... “The one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty” (Revelation 1:8).
- He is the Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14).

Jesus’ disciples never understood his kingship. 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). In today’s gospel, Jesus makes 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 confers the authority of his spiritual kingship upon his followers by declaring 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.”

It is with this spiritual power that we can witness Jesus to the world. Jesus can only rule the universe through us if we take up this power and use it. It is with this power we preach the Good News, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit prisoners, and drive out demons.

Christianity has a universal influence on world civilization, discoveries, geography, history, science, medicine, and development than any religion. The birth of Jesus brought about the categorization of world history to “Before Christ” and “After Christ.” The common calendar which is universally used is of Christian origin. From a few people in Judea, Christianity has spread to every part of the world. Out of the world population of 7.9 billion in 2021, the population of Christians is 2.3 billion. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel in the first reading, “He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14).

Christianity is under attack from those who propagate and enforce anti-Christian and anti-Catholic ideologies and policies. There is so much persecution of Christians in many parts of the world. However, our faith rests on Jesus’ words that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church (Matthew 16:18).

Along with the opposition against Christianity and the persecution of Christians, many Christians are inactive and timid. Many Christians are Christians only in name. The number of practicing Christians has drastically reduced. Jesus says in Luke 12:49, “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” St Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.” If Christians have the same level of passion seen in the entertainment world, business world, sports, science and technology, and so on, the earth, indeed, would be on fire!

Through the celebration of today’s feast, we pray that Jesus Christ rules our hearts, and reigns with love, truth, justice, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation in our lives, homes, businesses, work places, environments, communities, and so on. We pray that we become true ambassadors of Christ who are empowered by the kingship authority he confers on us. We pray for the rekindling of Jesus’ Spirit and fire in us so that we may blaze and set the earth on fire. Amen.

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