

Homily of Thirty Fourth Sunday Year C, Christ the King

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 nowadays that we are facing many anti-Christian and anti-Catholic ideologies such as 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 continue to proclaim Jesus as our leader and king.

In the first reading, all the tribes of Israel came to David and recognize him as their savior, their shepherd and their king. Our celebration today is a re-enactment of what took place in the first reading. Jesus is our new King David. We are celebrating him as our Savior, our Shepherd and our King.

The kingship of Jesus is not earthly but spiritual. Jesus' disciples and followers never understood his spiritual kingship. Even on his last day on earth they still asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). In the second reading, St. Paul explains the spiritual kingship of Jesus, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him [God's] fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for [God], making peace by the blood of his cross through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven." St. Paul states in the reading that we are members of his kingdom; and in him we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. For this reason, 1 Peter 2: 9 call us, "kingly people." For this reason, also, St. Paul challenges us, "This saying is trustworthy: 'If we have died with him, we shall live with him, if we persevere, we shall reign with him'" (2 Timothy 2:11).

To reign with Jesus, we are to: put Jesus first in all things; believe and have faith in him; obey his words and imitate him; proclaim him as the light, the way, the truth, and the life; witness him by our words and our actions; suffer for the sake of his name; overcome sin; and consult him in meditation and prayer.

It is through our discipleship that the world continues to see and experience the kingship of Jesus. Indeed, we are kingly people; whom he bestowed the mandate to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19); whom he gave authority over snakes, scorpions and all powers of the enemy (Luke 10:19); and whom he gave authority to cast out demons and heal the sick (Mark 16:17-18). But if the kingly people become weak, afraid, submissive, timid, confused and lose their mandate and authority, the kingship and the kingdom will suffer violence.

The kingship and the kingdom suffer even more violence if members of the kingdom turn against each other, and as a result work against the kingdom. Members of the kingdom cause violence to the kingship and the kingdom when they scatter instead of gathering; when they pull down instead of building up; when they fight instead of making peace; when they hate instead of loving; when they divide instead of uniting; when they incite bad blood instead of reconciling; when they compete instead of cooperating; when they work against instead of working together; when they discourage instead of encouraging; when they oppose instead of giving support; when they harden heart instead of listening; when they are selfish instead of being selfless; and so on. Jesus says, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and no town or house divided against itself will stand" (Matthew 12:25).

The kingdom is not remote in a distant land, or in the heavens, or across the sea. The kingdom is our home, our parish, our church, our neighborhood, our society, our work place, our business place, our market place, our gatherings, and so on. May we be ruled not by our human thinking, not by the world and its attractions, and not by the Evil One and his works. May Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe be our only ruler. Amen.

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