

Homily - Christ the King November 22, 2020

Today is the thirty fourth and last Sunday of Ordinary Time Year A. Most importantly, the Church celebrates the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the king of Universe. The Feast of Christ the King was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 in response to growing nationalism and secularism. It was also instituted in order to promote the worship of Christ both in the privacy of our hearts, as well as publicly.

The title of the feast was "*Jesu Christi Regis*" (Jesus Christ the King). However, in 1969 Pope Paul VI gave the feast a new title: "*Iesu Christi universorum regis*." (Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe). He also moved the celebration to the last Sunday in the liturgical calendar and transformed it from a feast to a "Solemnity." This day used to be known as the Feast of Christ the King or Corpus Christie.

When we talk about the image of king, we usually think of a king as one who rules over his people. He has a kingdom, has a throne, and lives in a castle. He has whole authority over his people and his country. He is surrounded by guards and protected by his subjects. They bow to him, submit themselves to him. A king is known to be rich and powerful and has authority of life & death over his subjects. All his people are subjected to him. This is the image of king of our own understanding and concept of kingship.

What is the image of Jesus Christ the King? What kind of king is he?

The image of Jesus Christ the King we have from the gospel today is very different from the most. *What made this king different?* Well, for one thing, Jesus didn't live in a palace. He didn't wear a beautiful robe or a jeweled crown. He had no servants to wait on him and no soldiers to fight his battles. He didn't even have a country over which to rule. The "King" keeps us even further away from approaching Him. However, if we look closely at the readings for this Sunday, we will see that Jesus our king is not only approachable; but He calls each of us to come and be a close friend.

The Responsorial Psalm (23:1-6) is again, the Psalm that we have heard so often recently known as "*The Lord is my Shepherd*." This beautiful prayer echoes the First Reading by bringing the loftiness of the relationship of God to Man down to the level of a shepherd tending his sheep with loving care and protection. Sheep were very important in biblical time. The Good Shepherd will do anything to care for & protect his sheep safe, even to the point of laying down his life – and so He did! God uses the image of a shepherd to help the people understand how much he loves us. Shepherds were to care for the sheep at all costs. God cares for us in the same way. He does those things for us. Sometimes God works through other people to take care of us. Sometimes God works through Us to help other people.

The Gospel Reading from Matthew also uses the humble image of sheep; but this time it is at the Last Judgment when all mankind will be separated between the faithful, represented here by the sheep, from the unfaithful, the goats. We heard about the judgment day when the good and the bad people will be separated from each other. God will judge each one according to his or her action. Then all mankind will be held

accountable and will see how we will all be judged as a shepherd separates sheep from goats, based upon our care for the poor. God likes for people to do these things. Jesus says that whatever we do for one of the least brothers of him, we do for him.

Today we adore Jesus as the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Rev 17, 1), and we exalt Him as the sovereign ruler of the universe (Dan 7, 14). The King who is compassionate and love and the king who does not rule with iron fist military might, or financial strength. Instead, he is a good Shepherd. He is a just judge, a compassionate and forgiving King.

As our Church year comes to its close today and next week we begin a New Church Year.

We move into Cycle B of Advent, we move into a time of preparation and waiting for the coming of Jesus. Let us prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus our king into our lives daily, and our willing acceptance of his rule in our hearts and in our souls. Amen.