

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

2 Sam. 5.1-3, Col. 1.12-20, Lk. 23.35-43

Today we finish the Liturgical year of cycle C. On the last Sunday of each liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, or Christ the King. Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 in response to a growing secularism and atheism.

In today's Gospel Jesus is provoked or challenged by three sets of characters. Those who sneered at him were the rulers, the soldiers and even one of the criminals hanging there reviled him. In Luke 23.26, 44, & 46, the scorn of the rulers and criminal focus on Jesus' title Messiah (anointed one). They challenge Jesus to Save Himself. Is this not ironic in that it is through the death of Jesus Christ in which Jesus saves us! How we receive salvation and the gates of heaven are opened, satan is defeated!

Our relationship with Jesus is not one of master to servant. Remember Jesus' words, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20.28). This King, Jesus Christ came to offer his life for our salvation! I know of no other King, no other man who offered his life to save all of us. What do we offer back to our King? There are 24 hours in a day or 168 hours in a week. Jesus is asking for you to give back to him 1 hour. One hour out of 168 hours, seems like a pretty small payback in the big picture of things. Our King came to deliver us from the oppression of sin. The cost was Jesus' intense suffering and crucifixion. Through the resurrection of our King the gates of heaven are opened.

At the top of the cross in which Jesus was crucified Pilate had the inscription "Christ King of the Jews" in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. This inscription was meant for all to see. In the Gospel writing we hear Jesus say that "My kingdom does not belong to this world." Jesus is speaking of His heavenly kingdom. Jesus rules over heaven and earth at the direction of God the Father. Think of how you would address a King? Who do you think a King would associate with? I think we all would agree that "royalty" would associate with the upper class, the wealthy and well connected. Our King, Jesus, is not an ordinary King. Jesus associates, lives and eats with the poor of the poor. King Jesus walks with the poor. King Jesus seeks a relationship with each one of us, rich or poor.

Through our baptism we become adopted sons and daughters of our Lord. Through our baptism we also become heirs, heirs to the kingdom of God. The CCC

783 states Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet and king. The whole people of God participates in these three offices.” We then as heirs, as part of our initiation Sacrament into the Church are called to these offices and to continue the mission as Jesus directed.

The CCC further explains that, “the people of God share in the *royal* office of Christ. He exercises his kingship by drawing all men to himself through his death and Resurrection. Christ, King and Lord of the universe, made himself the servant of all, for he came ‘not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. For the Christian, ‘to reign is to serve him,’ particularly when serving ‘the poor and suffering, in whom the Church recognizes the image of her poor and suffering founder. The people of God fulfills its royal dignity by a life in keeping with its vocation to serve Christ.”

Remember the words of the good thief, “Jesus remember me.” What a beautiful short prayer! Fr. Pablo Gadentz writes, “each day and throughout the day we can ask Jesus for many things we need, summing up our prayers of petition by asking Jesus to remember us, according to his mercy, remembering not our sins. And like the good thief, let us ask at the moment of our death: ‘Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus’ final Amen occurs when He grants the good thief’s request, saying “today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Today let us honor our King through the most Holy Mass, but let us not stop at the end of Mass. Let us see our King in the people we meet, in our neighbors, our friends and in the poor. As our King came to serve we too should also serve. May we serve our King through faith, hope and love. We are called to fulfill the mission which was given to us by Jesus Christ, that is to, “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28.19). We are called to live as King Jesus, to serve the poor. May we serve rather than be served. May our actions demonstrate Jesus Christ in us. May we grow in our service to Jesus Christ through the use of the Sacraments of the Church. Today let us rejoice for our King is here to bring about our salvation! Let us pray, Jesus remember us!