

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Dan. 7. 13-14, Rev. 1. 5-8, John 18. 33-37

Today we finish the Liturgical year of cycle B. 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 the feast in 1925 in response to a growing secularism and atheism.

In today's Gospel Jesus is asked by Pilate "Are you King of the Jews?" in which Jesus answers back with this question "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me? Jesus is under arrest, He knows what is about to happen, yet Jesus in one way seems to mock Pilate. St. Thomas Aquinas states, "There are two reasons why someone asks a question. Sometimes it is to find out something that the questioner does not know, as when a student questions his teacher. Sometimes one asks a question about things he already knows in order to learn what answer will be given; as when a teacher questions his student. Now our Lord knew both what he asked about, and what answer would be given, and thus he was not asking out of ignorance. Rather, he asked so that we might know what the Jews and gentiles thought, and at the same time be taught about that kingdom."

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.

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.

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 shares 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."

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 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!