

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Make the Sign of the Cross+

Leader of the Family:

In today's feast of Christ, the King,
we think about Jesus as the shepherd-king
whose flock includes all people throughout the world:
this image reflects God's love and care for every human being.

Penitential Act – Reflect on your need for God's forgiveness and mercy!!!

Today's Readings

First Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12. 15-17

The Lord is exasperated that those who were appointed to look after God's people have used their position for their own advantage and neglected their responsibilities: The Lord will take care of the flock from now on.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26. 28

Paul looks forward to the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time.

Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

The trial scene, set at the end of time, reveals God's judgement on how we have responded to the needs of our fellow human beings.

HOMILY FOR THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

*"In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine,
you did it to me."*

In the year 1789, the French Revolution broke out and began the end of royal rule in Europe. In country after country, kings and queens lost their thrones, and sometimes even their lives, as angry citizens set about establishing democratic forms of government. Those monarchies which managed to survive did so by accepting the changes in society and agreeing to the role of figureheads who had no real political power: this authority now lay with the people's elected representatives. Nowadays, most people would not accept the idea that someone is entitled to a place above others simply because of an accident of birth. A person today who ruled with absolute power and tolerated no opposition would be regarded as a dictator.

Some people may well find that they are uncomfortable with the idea of Christ as king; it suggests an archaic and outdated view of society and government. So, it might be useful to think about how the Bible views the idea of what it meant to be a king. First of all, the human ruler was not regarded as having absolute power. The king was God's representative, and his chief function was to be a unifying force among the people, especially in matters of justice. If the king exceeded royal powers, it was the duty of the prophet to remind him that he was not above the law of God. The person regarded as the ideal ruler was David, the shepherd who was anointed as the one to govern Israel in God's name, and to be the focal point of unity for the twelve tribes.

The biblical idea of Law, or Torah, means teaching or instruction. In the Gospel writings, Jesus shows a way of life, rather than an updated set of legal rules. In today's extract from Matthew's account, we hear about the last judgement, when the Lord will hold the people to account. We might note that the basis of judgement is social justice, not keeping the rules of the religious institution. It focuses on how we have treated one another, especially those most in need. This reflects the teaching of the prophets that social justice must go hand in hand with religious observance: one without the other is incomplete. We find this throughout the teaching of Jesus. Perhaps the most intriguing detail in our story today is that the members of both groups are surprised at the king's declaring that he is the one who has been the object of their concern or their neglect.

God is mystery. Mystery is something which we can keep trying to understand, even though we can never do so fully. We can only speak about God in terms which make sense to ourselves, so if we use the title "king", we might remember that the most important aspect of this in relation to Jesus is that of his being the focus of unity: his throne is the cross, and, as the Fourth Gospel tells us, the hour of his being glorified on the cross is when he will draw all people to himself.

We are the people of God in the world. It is our responsibility to live in such a way that we reveal to those around us the kind of God we believe in. When we celebrate the Eucharist together, we gather around the person of Jesus: Holy Communion is not simply an act of personal devotion, but a sign that we are united with those with whom we worship. In a world where there are so many divisions, our parish congregation could be an assembly where mutual respect and acceptance

are evident, because we are all trying to live according to the teachings of Jesus.

The last judgement is not about charity: it is about justice. It is necessary to do something about the actual situation in which some people find themselves: this comes under the heading of charity. It is also important to address the causes of why people's lives are in such a mess, and this is a matter of justice. This can come at personal cost: Hélder Câmara, the Brazilian archbishop who worked tirelessly to put the Gospel into practice, once remarked, "When I give food to the poor, I am called a saint: when I ask why the poor have no food, I am called a communist."

Summary

1. Most Western and European countries function under democratic forms of government: the idea of a king or queen exercising absolute power is not acceptable today.
2. Rulers in Israel were always to be subject to the law of God: they were to be shepherds, exercising authority as God intended them to do.
3. Today's feast presents Jesus as the focus of unity: we, as Christians, are called to present his teachings to others by the way in which we put them into practice in our lives.

Recite the Creed

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL FOR THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

Leader of the Family:

The Lord has spoken to us through the word in the scriptures.

We now speak in our own words to the Lord

in our prayers of intercession,

as we respond, 'Lord, hear our prayer',

Member of the Family:

1. We pray for our Holy Father, Pope Francis,
and all leaders in the Church:
may they set out clearly
and fearlessly the teachings of the Gospel.
We pray to the Lord...
2. We remember all those

who hold political authority in our country:
may they be guided by the common good
and by the requirements of justice.
We pray to the Lord...

3. We call to mind
all those places in the world
where there is conflict, war, and violence;
we ask for the gift of perseverance
for those who are working to bring about peace
and mutual understanding in such areas.
We pray to the Lord...
4. We bring before the Lord
all the sick members of our families and parish
and all those who would like to be with us here today
but are unable to come.
We pray to the Lord...
5. We remember all the faithful departed,
especially anyone we knew
who has died during the past twelve months.
We pray to the Lord...

Leader of the Family:

God our Father, we present to you these
and all the prayers of our hearts,
confident that you will hear and answer,
for we make them in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!!!

Recite the Our Father

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