

Scripture Study

Solemnity of Christ the King—Cycle B



Opening prayer

Daniel 7:13-14

(Psalm 93:1-2,5)

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18: 33b-37

Overview of the Gospel:

- Instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1926, the Solemnity of Christ the King was originally celebrated on the last Sunday in October to foster the awareness of Christ's dominion over all people and to establish peace among nations. After Vatican Council II the feast was transferred to the last Sunday of the Liturgical year, the Sunday before Advent, on which the human race is consecrated to the Sacred Heart through the Litany of the Sacred Heart and a prayer recited before the Blessed Sacrament.
- In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate, the procurator (or prefect) of Judea by the Jewish leaders who, out of jealousy, sought to destroy Jesus.
- Of all the Gospel accounts, St. John's gospel gives the longest and fullest account of Jesus' trial before Pilate, emphasizing the majesty of Christ as the Messianic King. This messianic kingship where the king is both divine and a "son of Man" was prophesied in Daniel, chapter 7 (see the First Reading).
- Because he has no interest in becoming embroiled in the religious controversies of the Jews or anybody else, Pilate's idea of kingship is completely different from that of Jesus. Much like the crowds who wanted to proclaim Jesus a "bread king" (John 6:15), Pilate's perspective is a worldly one. Even when given a subtle challenge by Jesus to recognize the truth that is standing right before him (verse 37), Pilate delivers his famous rejoinder, "What is truth?" (verse 38)

Questions:

- What reason did the Jewish leaders give Pilate for bringing Jesus to him (verses 33-34)? Why would he take this seriously? How are his fears like those of the Jewish leaders in John 11:48?
- What does Jesus tell Pilate about his kingdom (verses 36-37)? Who is included in it? What do you think Pilate meant by his concerns in verse 38? In his pursuit of "truth," is Pilate trying to absolve himself, or Jesus? Why do you think so?
- Since both Peter (John 13:36-38, 18:15-18, 25-27) and Pilate caved into pressure, why do we tend to scorn Pilate, but honor Peter? Do you see any of Pilate's qualities in yourself?
- How does Jesus imply that his kingship is exercised? What do you think it means for one who "belongs to the truth" to "listen to my voice"?
- Where do you find Jesus' kingdom (Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:13-14; Matthew 5:3-10)? How is Jesus your king?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 786, 215-217, 543-553, 557-560, 2471-2472, 908-913

Closing prayer

"The kingdom of God does not mean food or drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). *Truth and justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is the kingdom of Christ: the divine activity which saves men and which will reach its culmination when history ends and the Lord comes from the heights of paradise finally to judge men.* —St. Josemaria Escriva

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

"Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world"

Scripture: *John 18:33-37*

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice."

Meditation: Do you recognize Jesus' sovereignty over heaven and earth? Jesus was crucified for his claim to be the Messianic King who would rule not only over his people Israel but ultimately over all the nations as well. What is the significance or meaning of Jesus' kingship for us? Kingship today seems antiquated, especially in democratic societies where everyone is treated equal and free. God at first did not want to give his people Israel a king. Why? Because God alone was their King and they needed no other. Nonetheless, God relented and promised his people that through David's line he would establish a kingship that would last for



eternity (Psalm 89:29). The Jews understood that the Messiah would come as king to establish God's reign for them. They wanted a king who would free them from tyranny and from foreign domination. Many had high hopes that Jesus would be the Messianic king. Little did they understand what kind of kingship Jesus claimed to have. Jesus came to conquer hearts and souls for an imperishable kingdom, rather than to conquer perishable lands and entitlements.

When Satan tempted Jesus during his forty day fast in the wilderness, he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-9) Jesus knew that the world was in Satan's power. And this was precisely why Jesus came – to overthrow Satan's power and rulership over the earth. Jesus knew that the way to victory was through submission to his Father's will and through the sacrificial offering of his life upon the cross for the sins of the world.

As Jesus was dying on the cross, he was mocked for his claim to kingship. Nonetheless, he died not only as King of the Jews, but as King of the nations as well. His victory over the power of sin, Satan, and the world, was accomplished through his death on the cross and his resurrection. Jesus exchanged a throne of glory for a cross of shame to restore us from slavery to sin to glory with God as his adopted sons and daughters. In the Book of Revelations Jesus is called *King of kings and Lord and lords* (Revelations 19:16). Do you recognize Jesus Christ as your King and Lord?

The scriptures present us with the choice between two kingdoms – the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The choice is ours. Which kingdom do you serve? God's kingdom remains forever because it is built on the foundation of God's eternal love and justice. To accept Jesus as Lord and King is to enter a kingdom that will last forever where righteousness, peace, truth, and love dwell. Is your life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

"Lord Jesus Christ, you are my King and there is no other. Be the Lord and Master of my heart. May all that I do be pleasing to you and serve the best interests of my neighbor as well."

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