

Nov 24 Readings: no. 162, p. 765; BG, p. 421 1st Reading: 2 Samuel 5.1-3 2nd Reading: Colossians 1.12- 20 Gospel: Luke 23.35-43

CHRIST THE KING

Holy Mother Church organizes the liturgical year into six seasons. In 1925, the world was very disorganized and between global conflicts, when Pope Pius XI, institutes the observance of Christ the King. Once again in rhythm with our heart's yearning, we culminate the year with this beautiful solemnity. Time is so precious gift from God, that we should imagine no better way than to crown it worshipping the King of the Universe.

Today, fewer people are governed by any type of monarch. The role has been gradually shuffled off to fairy tales, legends and ceremonials. Still, thoughts of kings and queens conjure up images of might and power.

We should wonder, why it took so long to add this solemnity to our calendar. Did we assume the entire universe acknowledges Jesus as its king? Or did we just discover Christ in 1925? Perhaps, Pope Pius XI prophetically saw a very different time looming for Christians. A time when many would abandon the faith and turn their allegiances to other majesties. On this great solemnity, the People of God collect to announce and declare our fidelity; as subjects of the one and true God.

Origen of Alexandria is an early Christian scholar in the Patristic period who says, "Thus it is clear, that he who prays for the coming of God's kingdom, prays rightly to have it within himself, that there, it may grow and bear fruit and become perfect." He later records in his notebook, "There should be in us a spiritual paradise, where God may walk and be our sole ruler, with His Christ." Brothers and sisters, do we imagine that a spiritual paradise describes our state of well-being?

Friends, the kingship that Origen describes enters us each and every time we seek of its awareness in the wisdom of Scripture. And most especially when we approach the body and blood of Christ. When we respond, "amen," do we allow that amen to grow and bear fruit? The Anointed king to whom we bow, wishes to dwell within and animate us. The sovereign Father along with the Holy Spirit of our Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, we praise and exult united, thus, with God's Christ.

We listened, in our first reading from Samuel, to the account of David's coronation. A courageous military leader, energetic, and long-serving monarch. David's is a shepherd, a musician and Israel's third king. He is not perfect, but he is certainly the people's choice.

God's not too keen on His people having any mortal sovereign, but allows this to be so, after being somewhat pestered. There's a soft spot in God's heart that seems to favor David, and his lineage.

Paul also writes an important letter to the Colossians, while enjoying a few nights' accommodation, courtesy of the crown. He's in jail over his troublesome preaching, but says, "even now I find joy in the suffering, I endure for you." The communique causing Paul all his grief, informs of the Mystery of Christ, of which you and I participate. Christ the King, shares with us the only hope we have of glory and imperishability.

Whereas, we are patterned after the image of God, and given a certain likeness, Christ is the actual likeness of God. We are the adopted Children of God, but Jesus is the natural Son and full image of that invisible God. Christ is supreme in every way over all creation and supreme over the Church, which is unthinkable and unattainable without Him. Christ is the first raised from the dead and our promise of eternal life. I can't imagine communicating any greater news.

And then Luke brings us to the account of Jesus' crucifixion. A king with no palace, no fine horses, no warriors and sometimes even, no place to sleep at night.

And what kind of king is born among animals or washes the dusty feet of his students? No friends, this king looks more like a commoner. His background is in tending to the needs of sheep and maybe a little masonry or carpentry? The Romans also know a little bit about wood. They know perfectly well how to quickly put together horizontal and vertical, wooden beams, in such a way, as to support the weight of a man.

Crucified on each side of our King are two notorious criminals. The Prince of Peace flanked by common criminals, being handed only what the law says they deserve. Jesus is there, because he is a perceived threat to the consciences of the advantaged. He's teaching about God's kingdom, healing people of their afflictions; comforting widows, foreigners and orphans. A terrible disruption, this must represent to public order. For humankind to experience the loss of such a king, would surely incite a riot. But it doesn't! The people stand by and watch. Some king of the Jews, or anyone else, is this person. The religious and political leaders find it appropriate to make sport of the event. They imagine they've won for a couple days, that is, until they discover an empty tomb. For one convicted criminal, his brief encounter with Jesus will have eternal and far reaching implications. Remember me too Jesus.

Today, as we draw the curtains closed on our past liturgical year, we again crown Jesus, Sovereign of our lives, and take our place in His royal court. Praying with word and deed, "Thy Kingdom Come," Soaked in the grace of our Baptism, when we were anointed, as Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King. We are sent forth to build alongside our Brother, an everlasting dominion where God's mercy and justice is the supreme Ruler.

Amen