

Cycle B The Solemnity Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Reading 1 Daniel 7:13-14

As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a Son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.

Responsorial Psalm PS 93:1, 1-2, 5

R. (1a) The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.

The LORD is king, in splendor robed; robed is the LORD and girt about with strength.

R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.

And he has made the world firm, not to be moved. Your throne stands firm from of old; from everlasting you are, O LORD.

R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.

Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed; holiness befits your house, O LORD, for length of days.

R. The LORD is king; he is robed in majesty.

Reading 2 Revelation 1:5-8

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. All the peoples of the earth will lament him. Yes. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, " says the Lord God, "the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

Gospel John 18:33B-37

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

No doubt we are still dealing with the impact on our health and wellbeing by Covid-19 as we continue to hear about the senseless violence and acts of hatred around the world every day. Hatred is palpable as we see division here at home and in the Church, we see the global decline in democracy, the rise in racism and autocratic ideology, and we hear about ongoing violent devastation in Haiti, Afghanistan, and Venezuela, to name a few. All of these threaten us and feed our fears. We all recognize, that there are dark forces surrounding people throughout the world. Hatred in many forms attacks our cultures and religions without regard to human dignity and life. The chaotic situation today seems like it is not that different from that of a 100 years ago...it was a time when World War I had been fought and the Treaty of Versailles, while ending that war, had at the same time laid the groundwork for World War II. In 1924, with Germany in economic ruin, Adolph Hitler published his book *Mein Kampf*. Nazism was gaining power. It advocated radical nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism. Other dark storm clouds were gathering as well. Atheistic Communism was sinking its roots into Russian soil. The leaders of many political systems hated the Catholic Church.

So it was, on December 11, 1925 that Pope Pius XI, instituted the feast of Christ the King in response to the growing secularism and nationalism, and in the context of the unresolved “Roman Question” of papal sovereignty over Vatican City. Pius XI stated that all people can enter this kingdom, whoever they are and from wherever they are *“since this kingdom is opposed to none other than Satan and to the power of darkness.”* You see, this kingdom welcomes all kingdoms and all people.

Someone once said, *“If there is no divine being above us, we will be consumed by all that is around us.”* If Christ in His kingship is removed from our lives we will be at the mercy of any and all forces in this world that are more powerful than our own....We have only to look at the world to know this.

But, today the Scriptures tell us that God loves mankind so much that Jesus is the King of all creation. We are reminded how great the Lord God is as He named Himself the *Alpha and the Omega...the one who is and who was and who is to come...the almighty*. How fitting it is that we celebrate Jesus this way on the last Sunday of the Church Year...with the faith that Jesus

Christ is our Lord and King. Did you know that since 1970 we celebrate Christ the King on this last Sunday of Ordinary Time, before Advent, along with Protestant churches such as the Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans and others?

As Christians we belong to the truth because we listen to Jesus Christ our King. He establishes His justice and peace among us. But in order to do so, He relies on each of us to act in our own way. He relies on our love. And, He relies on the gift of our very lives and souls, in order to reveal His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven to all mankind.

We often hear words that challenge us to be *“in the world but not of the world.”* As Christians we are called to deeply love as we engage our surrounding world. Our Catholic faith calls us not to escape our world but rather to bring forth holiness amidst all that is unholy. He made us into *“a kingdom, priests for His God and Father.”* That means you and I with our Baptismal priesthood are in God’s power, to consecrate and sanctify the world by helping to restore its original holiness, the holiness in which God created it. The world is our altar, and down upon it we call a God-given power of love to overcome fear, hatred, racism, exploitation, poverty, and death of innocent lives. Far from fleeing this world, we are called to enter into it, all the while praying to our Father: *“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

This is the way it is in Christ’s kingdom. And, if Christ’s kingdom is to be revealed here on earth, made real in our world as it is in heaven, we must work to make it so. Do we expect God to give it all to us without any effort on our part, in spite of our indifference, our neglect, our rejection of Him...our sin? That would be nonsense. That would be foolish. In fact, that would be arrogant on our part, expecting that God will do it all for us anyway, even though we pay scant attention to Him and give Him little, if anything, of our hearts and souls. *“If there is no divine being above us, we will be consumed by all that is around us.”*

But as the Gospel says, we belong to the truth because we listen to Christ our King....the powers of this world will never rule us or hold us in their grip. With God our Father and Christ our King, we will never betray each other. He relies on each of us to act in our own way, He

relies on our love, and He relies on the gift of our very lives and souls, in order to reveal His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven to all mankind.

I would like to share the brief letter of a widower, Antione Leiris, who lost his wife Helene in the November 2015 terrorist attacks that killed 130 people and wounded 416 others in Paris:

On Friday evening you stole the life of an exceptional person, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you will not have my hatred. So no, I will not give you the satisfaction of hating you. You want it, but to respond to hatred with anger would be to give in to the same ignorance that made you what you are.

You would like me to be scared, for me to look at my fellow citizens with a suspicious eye, for me to sacrifice my liberty for my security. You have lost. The player still plays.

I saw her this morning. At last, after nights and days of waiting. She was as beautiful as when she left on Friday evening, as beautiful as when I fell head over heels in love with her more than 12 years ago. Of course I am devastated with grief, I grant you this small victory, but it will be short-lived. I know she will be with us every day and we will find each other in the heaven for free souls...

Us two, my son and I, we will be stronger than every army in the world. I cannot waste any more time on you as I must go back to [my son] who has just woken from his sleep. He is only just 17 months old, he is going to eat his snack just like every other day, then we are going to play like every other day and all his life this little boy will be happy and free.

Because you will never have his hatred either.

I once read that the attitude of the French people was not one of retaliation, but of defiance. Now I understand what that can mean. It's how another journey of justice and peace, of love, of mercy and forgiveness in the face of hatred can begin.

You know, people who think they hate us have no idea what they are up against! We belong to the truth because we listen to Jesus Christ our King!