

21<sup>st</sup> November, 2021.

Sunday, Week 34 in Ordinary Time.

*The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.*

*Introduction:*

This is the last Sunday of the liturgical year when we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. On this great feast we rejoice in calling Christ our King. We owe him an allegiance we would not give to any other power on earth.

*Scripture Note:*

*First Reading (Daniel 7:13-14).* On the last Sunday of the Church's Liturgical Year, we think of the end and of judgement. The apocalyptic vision from the book of Daniel sets the tone.

The Prophet foresees the coming of a son of man who will have dominion over all peoples. 'Son of man' is a title for the future redeemer. The early Christians saw this prophecy as being fulfilled in Christ, the Universal King. However, all things are not yet subdued under his feet. That will be so only at the end of time.

*Second Reading (Apocalypse 1:5-8).* Basing itself on this same text from Daniel, Apocalypse looks from the redemption wrought by Christ in time to his coming at the end of time, when he will take full possession of his kingdom.

*Gospel (John 18:33-37).* The Gospel, where the lectionary once again shifts to John, contains a section from the passion narrative. There is no doubt but that Jesus was crucified on the charge of being a messianic pretender. The title 'King of the Jews' posted on the cross makes that clear.

In our passage Jesus is being interrogated by Pilate. The issue here is the nature of Jesus' kingship. Jesus declares that he is indeed a king, but not the kind of king the world understands. Jesus has come into the world as the bearer of divine revelation. Fulfilling that role is what being king means to him. This refutes recent attempts to portray Jesus as a political revolutionary.

*Prayer/Reflection:*

Jesus had no palace, no throne, no crown, and no army.  
Yet we call him our King,  
and we give him an allegiance and a loyalty  
we would not give to any other person or institution on earth.  
Lord Jesus, our King and our Shepherd,  
gather your flock from the ends of the earth  
into the peace and joy of your Kingdom.  
To you belong glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

*Saints of the Week:*

*Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of November: Memorial of Saint Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr. (red)*

*Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> of November: Optional Memorial of Saint Clement I, Pope and Martyr. (red)  
Or Saint Columban, Abbot. (white)*

*Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> of November: Memorial of Saint Andrew Dung-Lac (Priest)  
and Companions, Martyrs. (red)*

*Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> of November: Optional Memorial of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin and Martyr. (red)*

*Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> of November.*

*The First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of the New Liturgical Year for 2022.*

*Scripture Readings – Year 'C'*

*Theme: Watch and Pray*

*First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16.*

*Second Reading:*

*1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2.*

*Gospel, Luke 21:25-28, 34-36.*

*Homily for Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> of November – The last Sunday of the Liturgical Year.  
The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.*

*Homily theme: The True King*

When we read the uplifting words of the prophet Daniel foretelling the coming of the Messiah, we realize that those words apply to Christ and his coming in glory; that day when the eternal kingdom of Christ will be apparent to all.

Daniel was conscious that the rich and powerful empires that had dominated the world and overshadowed the history of Israel were passing away and that the Messiah would rule over a different kind of kingdom in which people would forever acknowledge the true God, the God of Israel.

In the second reading from the Apocalypse, Saint John is clearly referring to the prophecy of Daniel and he makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is the promised king Messiah.

When we come to today's Gospel reading as recorded by Saint John the evangelist on the trial of Jesus before Pilate, we have the encounter of the representative of Imperial Rome with Jesus. On the one hand Pilate is impatient to know the truth about Jesus, but on the other hand his Roman education and his experience of the world has made him profoundly sceptical. And that inability to accept the reality of objective truth not only makes him deaf to what Jesus is saying, it also makes him a very poor judge.

Today's readings look back in time and look forward, but they are also very much about the present, because the Kingship of Christ has been an ever-present reality since Calvary, since that infinite moment when Christ demonstrated the infinite love of God on the cross.

But how does our view of human power affect our understanding of the Kingship of Christ? We believe that God is almighty, yes, but his power is pure goodness and mercy. That's why we learn as revealed in our second reading, 'He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood'. God forgave our sins through the death of Christ on the cross, the greatest sign of his love. His power, as revealed to Saint Paul, is made perfect in weakness (*2 Corinthians 12:19*).

A good way to enter into the mystery of the nature of the Kingship of Christ is to reflect as best we can on the nature of power as it actually works in nature. Think about our own lives, or, more dramatically, about the lives of the important figures in history, both good and bad. Did deference shown them really give true peace or happiness? Or was it an attempt to pursue in their never-ending desire for power and control.

It's okay to ask the challenging questions about what is important to us, where our priorities should be, and what it is to be truly human.

What is revealed to us is that idols command; whereas Christ invites people. The idols bring oppression and death; whereas Christ brings freedom and love. No wonder we give him an allegiance, a loyalty, which we would not give to any other person or institution on earth.

Our belief in our crucified and risen King points us away from worldly ideas of kingship. It points us rather towards a kingship that outstrips the experience of earthly power. So the Feast of Christ as the King of the Universe is, among other things, a reminder of a deep truth about our lives, about where true happiness is to be found, and where it is not found.

There is no denying that we are living in very troubled and challenging times, and that Christian values are increasingly being side-lined! But let us never forget, however, that the Father's love and mercy are at the heart of the Kingdom. Jesus didn't tell us to fear the last day, only to be ready for it.

Today's Feast calls and invites us to make room for Jesus Christ in our hearts by imitating his life however imperfectly, for revealed in the loving Kingship of Christ is the victory that is for us!

*Prayerfully in Christ's redeeming love,*

*Fr. Brian*