

CHRIST THE KING, Cycle B

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. We have family in, so it is always great.

I want to take just a moment to remind you of the challenge I gave a few weeks back to carve out or improve your prayer life, and to give a quick update on my own progress with my pledge of “no prayer, no bible, no breakfast”. Overall, its going well, though to be honest, I’ve gone hungry a few mornings.

This Feast of Christ the King marks an end to our Liturgical Year. If you have not yet committed or need to re-commit to prayer, now is a good time as we enter into a new Church Year.

The Feast of Christ the King is a reasonably new one in the history of the Church. It is evident in the Gospel that the Kingship of Jesus is not a new Christian belief but rather something we have held as true all along.

In 1925, Pope Pius XI promulgated this Feast. At that time we were a world that had been torn apart by war. Communism, fascism and nationalism were a young but rapidly growing threat.

This feast was born out of the prophetic wisdom of the Church as a reminder that these despots, the Mussolini’s and Stalin’s and Hitler’s of the world, were only passing through.

Evil as they were, as wicked as some can be today, they are temporary. The only kingdom that will last is that of Christ.

All the others, including our own nation, as great as she is, are really just peaks and troughs on the timeline of human history.

That doesn't mean that we are to be passive and let time pass. We are in the world and as such, responsible for it. We are impacted by our economy and our laws. We are affected by the behavior of other nations and their leaders.

As Americans, we live in a nation, born of Christian principles, that has seen an erosion of those same principles. We need to reflect on what it is that made us great and return to those ideals. Freedom, equality and justice are as needed today as they were in 1776 when we threw off the tyranny of the King of England.

Perhaps because of our history as a nation, we are not comfortable with monarchs. We tend to equate them only to their negative aspects.

But being a monarch, a king, really meant something in Jesus' time.

For nations, the king was most often the only means of securing order and peace. (Pause)

This Feast serves to remind us . . . that Jesus is a King like none other.

He says that his kingdom is not of this world. It is a kingdom not fought for with old means of warfare. Rather, it testifies to truth.

This King did not kill for the truth, He died for it. He is victorious, not by spilling the blood of others, but by pouring out his own.

This King does not demand ransom. He is the ransom.

This is a very different King, to be sure.

In His Birth, humble and poor, in His life, a servant, in His Death and Resurrection – both Suffering and Glorious.

He is a King who does not demand we become His subjects . . . rather He invites us.

We also see in Jesus a King that summons **nothing less** than the loyalty of a **human heart that is free**.

In justice and in faith and in truth we are free to choose to serve this King above all others. He is a King who said who said in the 15th Chapter of the Gospel of John **“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends,* because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father..”**

Opening our heart to Christ we find a King whose ambition was not to **dominate** humanity but to **save and serve** it.

In opening our hearts we come to understand what it means to be a subject, or servant of the King of Kings We come to understand what it means to be, in truth, forever free.

My sisters and brothers, we are a part of this Kingdom of Christ's. We entered its gates through the waters of Baptism.

We are fed each Sunday at our King's Banquet. But the decision to live as a friend of Jesus is a daily, sometimes even a moment to moment choice.

We are called to loyalty and fidelity to this King, a loyalty given out of love.

We are both called **and enabled** by the Gift of the Holy Spirit, to be His Humble subjects . . . not as slaves but as free men and women, so that by our actions, and by our love, we make present to all of humanity the kingdom of God that they, too, may know and come to love our King.