

## Homily Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe Yr B

Today, on this last Sunday of the Church's liturgical year, we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Next week we begin a new liturgical year with the first Sunday of Advent.

This feast was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925, in the wake of the devastation of World War I, as an antidote to secularism, that is, a way of life that leaves God out of people's thinking and the way they live; a way of life that organizes the entire social and political order as if God does not exist.

Pope Pius XI says that when Christ does not reign in the minds and hearts of men, they then can easily fall into evil ways and deeds – between individuals, and between nations, with wars, violence, destruction, and loss of lives.

This happened in WWI; it happened again in WWII; and today, we are on the brink of World War III. We must pray that all peoples, especially leaders of nations, turn to Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the true Prince of Peace; and pray to Our Lady, Queen of Peace, who at Fatima gave us the definitive peace plan from Heaven: to pray the Rosary every day – our greatest spiritual weapon.

This feast is intended to proclaim in a striking manner Christ's universal kingship: over all individuals & families; society, governments, and nations.

Question: How can the kingship of Jesus Christ extend over all peoples, all rulers of nations – even over those who do not believe in Him?

Because, as Pope Pius XI explains in his encyclical which instituted this feast, that Jesus is universal King by a two-fold right:

First, by a *natural* right, because He is God – the Eternal Son of God who became man; and as God, He is the Creator of all things, who sustains all creation in being. As St. Paul says, "*All things were created through Him, all were created for Him; He is before all else that is, and in Him everything continues in being*" (Col. ).

The Prophet Daniel, in our first reading today, gives Jesus the title “Son of man.” Why? Because He is the Son of God who became man, who (says Daniel) “*received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, all nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, His kingship shall not be destroyed.*”

And our Psalm today says, “*the Lord is King, the world he made firm.*”

So, Jesus is King by a natural right, given that He is God: He made all things and keeps them in being; therefore, He reigns over all creation.

But Jesus is also King by an *acquired* right – because He is our Redeemer; on the cross He offered His Body and Blood as the sacrificial Lamb to pay the price for our sins, and then rose from the dead, conquering death, and who offers eternal life to all who believe in Him and follow Him.

As St. John in the book of Revelation tells us in our second reading today, Jesus Christ “*is the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth. He has freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us into a kingdom.*”

What is this kingdom to which St. John refers? It is the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth. Here are a few quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

CCC 567 “The kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on earth by Christ. The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom. Its keys are entrusted to Peter.”

CCC 541 “*Everyone* is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations. . . .”

CCC 763 “The Lord Jesus inaugurated *his Church* by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the *Reign of God*, promised over the ages in the scriptures. To fulfill the Father's will, *Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. **The Church is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery.***”

But Christ's Kingdom, the Church, will only be perfected on the Last Day, when Christ comes again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, and the separation of the sheep from the goats takes place. When all the just are united with Christ, then His Kingdom, His Mystical Body – with Jesus as Head and we as members – will be fully perfected; and then Jesus will hand over the Church to His Father.

In the meantime, Jesus wants us to extend His universal kingship – His social reign – to all peoples of all nations. This is the work which we call the apostolate, or the evangelization of all peoples and nations.

Jesus wants every single person on earth to enter into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church that He founded on Peter and the Apostles. This is precisely why before He ascended into Heaven, He commanded His Apostles: *“Go forth and preach to all nations, teaching them everything I have taught you, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And know that I am with you until the end of the age.”*

Also, in this time between Christ's first and second comings, Jesus reigns as King *in the Eucharist*, where He is present in every tabernacle, and made present on every altar, at every Mass.

This is what many saints refer to as Christ's “Eucharistic reign.”

And Jesus in the Eucharist reigns not only as our King, but also as our High Priest, who, as St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Hebrews (our second reading from Mass last Sunday), *“offered one sacrifice for our sins and for ever sits at the right hand of God, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.”*

*“By His one offering [on the Cross],”* says St. Paul, *“He has made perfect those who are being consecrated.”*

That one offering on the Cross by Jesus is re-presented at every Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; this is what we recall, and celebrate, at every Mass, which makes present Christ's one Sacrifice which perfectly atoned for our sins.

This is why we all must be evangelizers, witnesses to Jesus to others, to extend His social reign over all peoples and nations.

Jesus wants everyone on earth to worship Him in the manner that Christ our Savior wills: at the Mass – where He, as High Priest offers Himself as the sacrificial Lamb (through the ordained priest, who acts *in persona Christi* (in the Person of Christ)); AND He wants everyone to partake of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. This is precisely why Jesus says: *“Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him on the last day”* (Jn. ch. 6).

God positively wills that the entire social order be organized around the true worship of Him as established by His Son, Jesus, who Present in the Eucharist; because this is the most important thing we, God’s creatures, do. This is the Catholic way of viewing the social order.

This work of evangelization, of extending the social reign of Christ – His universal kingship – to all of society, a work to which all of us are called, begins in the home and in the family.

This is why in enthroning the Sacred Heart of Jesus within the home and family is so important: Christ’s reign is a reign of love, symbolized most perfectly by his Sacred Heart, the great symbol of his divine and human love.

Placing an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a prominent place in the home is a way to constantly remind us that Christ is our King who, in love, reigns over us.

And because the BV Mary is Queen who reigns with her Son, Jesus, it is customary to enthrone an image of Mary’s Immaculate Heart alongside Christ’s Sacred Heart.

I am most happy to do an enthronement in any home; just ask me.

In proclaiming this feast, Pope Pius XI ordered that a prayer be prayed on this feast – the ***Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus***, which now I will read:

## ***Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus***

Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us, humbly prostrate before Thine altar. We are Thine and Thine we wish to be; but to be more surely united with Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Thy Most Sacred Heart.

Many, indeed, have never known Thee; many, too, despising Thy precepts, have rejected Thee. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to Thy Sacred Heart.

Be Thou King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken Thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned Thee, grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house, lest they die of wretchedness and hunger.

Be Thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof

and call them back to the harbor of truth and unity of faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one shepherd.

Be Thou King of all those who even now sit in the shadow of idolatry or Islam, and refuse not Thou to bring them into the light of Thy kingdom.

Look, finally, with eyes of pity upon the children of that race, which was for so long a time Thy chosen people; and let Thy Blood, which was once invoked upon them in vengeance, now descend upon them also in a cleansing flood of redemption and eternal life.

Grant, O Lord, to Thy Church, assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry: Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation: to it be glory and honor forever. Amen