

Homily Christ the King Year A: Jesus Christ Reigns Over All

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Today, on this last Sunday of the Church year, we celebrate the great Solemnity of Christ the King.

Yes, Jesus is the universal King of kings and Lord of lords, who reigns over all peoples and nations.

How can Jesus reign over *all* peoples and nations - even over those who do not acknowledge Him as their King and their God?

He can do so, based on **two rights: first**, by a ***natural*** right, since He is God, Creator and thus Supreme Ruler over all of creation, which includes all peoples and nations.

Second, by an ***acquired*** right - as universal Redeemer and Savior.

Jesus is the Eternal Word made flesh, who suffered and died to redeem every single person on earth, from the first man, Adam, to the very last, at the end of the world.

Jesus acquired a right to reign over everyone, because He shed His precious Blood for every person on earth.

Of course, only those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer, King, and Lord will, in the end, reign with Him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

For as St. Paul tells us in first Corinthians, our second reading today: "Just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life."

This "being brought to life from the dead" comes - as St. Paul tells us - at "the end" - i.e., at the end of the world, at Christ's Second Coming, when the resurrection of all the dead takes place, followed by the General Judgment.

Jesus speaks of this in today's Gospel: at His Second Coming, Jesus will "sit upon his glorious throne"; the dead will rise, and "all peoples and nations will be assembled before him" for judgment.

Then, like a shepherd, He will “separate the sheep from the goats,” placing “the sheep on his right in the goats on his left.”

To the sheep on His right he will say, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; because I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me.”

To the goats on His left He will say, “Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, thirsty and you gave me no drink, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

The words of Jesus makes crystal clear that more than faith alone – saying we believe in Him – is needed to gain entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

If we desire to attain Heaven, we must actively practice charity towards others – in whom we should see Jesus. And when we fail in charity, we turn our backs on our Lord.

We might ask ourselves a fundamental question:

If Jesus – as universal King, God and Redeemer – reigns over all peoples and nations, why isn't His Gospel message embraced & and lived out by everyone in the world?

Well, for two basic reasons. The **first** is, the world does not follow the teachings of Jesus because many people in the world do not know and acknowledge Him as their Lord, King and Savior.

When Jesus lived on earth, His own people, the Jews, rejected Him as their Messiah and King; in fact, both the Jews and the Gentiles mocked Him as such - recall that that the Roman soldiers placed a chronic thorns on His head; and at the top of the cross on which Jesus died were written the words, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

Today, 2000 years later, Jesus is still hated by many, and His teachings ignored and despised.

The **second** reason the world does not follow Jesus is because He does not reign over our minds/hearts as He should, even among those who profess to believe in Him.

The feast we celebrate today, Christ's universal Kingship, was first proclaimed almost 100 years ago by Pope Pius XI, with his 2nd encyclical, which he wrote in 1925, titled "On the Feast of Christ the King."

Pius XI's first encyclical, written in 1922 – called "On the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ," laid the groundwork for the feast he proclaimed three years later.

Even though it was written more than 100 years ago, it reads as though it could have been written yesterday. I'll quote some lines from this encyclical:

21. Men today do not act as Christians, as brothers, but as strangers, and even enemies. The sense of man's personal dignity and of the value of human life has been lost in the brutal domination [of one nation over another] . . . [Men] have turned to the acquisition of material and temporal possessions and are forgetful of eternal and spiritual things, to the possession of which Jesus, Our Redeemer, by means of the Church, His living interpreter, calls mankind.

Sound familiar? No value for human dignity/the value of human life? One nation exercising brutal domination over another? Focusing on acquiring material possessions and forgetting eternal and spiritual things – to which Jesus calls mankind?

I'll quote Pope Pius XI again:

28. . . . Because men have forsaken God and Jesus Christ, they have sunk to the depths of evil. They waste their energies and consume their time and efforts in vain sterile attempts to find a remedy for these ills, but without being successful. . . .

Why? Because they do not turn to Jesus Christ, the King, who tells us, "Without me, you can do nothing."

Pius XI then says that in setting up their governments, "It was a quite general desire that both laws and governments should exist *without recognizing* God or Jesus Christ, on the theory that all authority comes from men, not from God."

How many nations have set up governments and enacted laws and policies, without recognizing Jesus Christ as King? I would say every nation on earth!!!

Pius XI goes on:

29. Again, legislation was passed which did not recognize that either God or Jesus Christ had any rights over marriage - an erroneous view which debased matrimony to the level of a mere civil contract, despite the fact that Jesus Himself had called it a "great sacrament" (*Ephesians* 5:32) . . . [and] the idea of the family, the germ of all social life, . . . became confused in the minds of many.

Today, court decisions and laws have attempted to redefine marriage and the family – which, in fact, is not possible, given that God at the beginning of the human race instituted marriage between one man and one woman.

Continuing, Pius XI says:

30. Added to all this, God and Jesus Christ, as well as His doctrines, were banished from the school. As a sad but inevitable consequence, the school became not only secular and non-religious, but openly atheistic and anti-religious. . . .

Thus, the school, forcibly deprived of the right to teach anything about God or His law, could not but fail in its efforts to *really* educate, that is, to lead children to the practice of *virtue*

Yes, and now books are in our public school libraries throughout the nation, which undermine children's innocence and introduce them into sexual perversity.

Pope Pius XI ends his magnificent encyclical with these words:

48. It is possible to sum up all We have said in one word [or phrase], "the Kingdom of Christ." For Jesus Christ reigns over the *minds of individuals* by His teachings, in their hearts by His love, in each one's life by the living according to His law and the imitating of His example.

Jesus reigns over the family when (says Pius XI) - modeled after the holy ideals of the sacrament of matrimony instituted by Christ – it maintains unspotted its true character of sanctuary. In such a sanctuary of love, parental authority is fashioned after the authority of God, the Father, from Whom it originates.

The way families along with all family members can become a true "sanctuary of Christian love" is for them to acknowledge Christ as their King. A beautiful practice to help accomplish this to Enthroned an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a prominent place the home, as a constant reminder that Jesus reigns over us – because His Sacred Heart is the most perfect Symbol of His divine and human love. Then the family members carry this message to those in the broader society – to transform it, and to

further establish Christ's reign. Normally we enthrone an image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary along with that of the SHJ: Mary reigns as Queen with her Son over us.