



THE NEW SHOFAR

Jesus was God spelling himself out in language humanity could understand

November 26th

Jesus: On Friday a thief, on Sunday a King

The feast of Christ the King is always celebrated on the last Sunday of the liturgical year. It was introduced into the Church's calendar in 1925 for a very good reason. It was to serve as a kind of spiritual antidote to the cultural, social and economic decadence that was tearing the Western World apart. It was envisaged as a response to the rise of secularization, and atheism. In the face of these and other godless movements the Church was determined to publicly acknowledge the supremacy of Jesus Christ over all peoples and nations.

Note the date: the Sunday immediately before the beginning of Advent. Not an accident. The feast reminds us that Jesus Christ is not only King of this world, reigning over the nations. He is also the Eternal King, the King glorified by the saints in heaven, the same King who will one day come to judge us all.

It is stating the obvious to point out how peace still eludes us; social, political and economic upheaval is still prevalent; and the nations continue to reject the Gospel. It is not all that far removed from the situation in 1925 when the feast was inaugurated. The world needs now, more than ever, our Christian witness to Christ the King's rule over all things.

God reigns in and through His Son and those the Son chooses

If all power in heaven and on earth is given to Christ our Lord; if all men and women, purchased by his precious blood shed for us on the cross, are by that saving death subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all peoples one thing one thing becomes abundantly clear: not one aspect of our lives is exempt from his empire. He must reign in the entirety of our lives. Over everything we do, all we think and speak. Not one part of our identity is beyond divine oversight and care.

Christ's kingship is in fact a revelation and a realisation of Kingship of God the Father. How do we experience the Father's Kingship, a King who governs all things with love and justice? Today's feast helps answer that question – in Christ the King. It is by living in Christ, by imitating his life, his ministry and his love for the Father and for our brothers and sisters that we find ourselves shrouded in the life of the King of Heaven.

We know from the Gospel of John that this is the way the Kingdom of God works. It is because the Father entrusted to the Son the mission of giving humankind eternal life. He fulfilled this mission by loving us to the point of supreme sacrifice and, at the same time, the Father conferred upon him the power of judging humanity, since he made himself Son of man, like us in all things (cf. **John 5: 21-22, 26-27**).

Jesus Christ – God, Son, Saviour, King and Judge

Today's Gospel insists precisely on the universal kingship of Christ the Judge. The Church celebrates and acknowledges this by ending the liturgical year with the magnificent parable of the Last Judgment. It was no accident that St Matthew placed this parable immediately before the Passion narrative (**25: 31-46**).

The images in the parable are simple, but the message is extremely important: it is the truth about our ultimate destiny and about the criterion by which we will be evaluated as we stand before our King and our Judge: *I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me* (**Matthew 25: 35**) and so forth.

This parable is a part of our heritage as Christians. It has been told over and over again, passed down through generations of believers because it identifies the core Kingdom principles we bring to the world: the hierarchy of values, the schools and universities, the institutions, the multiple charitable and social organizations. It is in us, through us that the Reign of Christ the King is established in the world.

In the Eucharist, Christ the King sits on the throne of mercy

This Kingdom is inaugurated in the heart of men and women: it is there that Christ wants to reign first. For that to happen we must let go of the reins of power over our lives and leave the governance of our lives to Christ the King: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near* (**Matthew 3:2**). Happiness comes at this price. With this conversion, Christ can then establish his reign over human intelligence because he is the Truth that sets us free.

Christ also reigns through his charity that leads our will into the logic of self-surrender. However, Jesus, risen and glorious, reveals the true and universal character of his Kingship: *All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth* (**Matthew 28:18**). In other words, this Kingship of Christ will necessarily have socio-political effects.

If men came to recognize the royal authority of Christ in their private and public lives, unbelievable blessings — true liberty, order and tranquillity, harmony and peace — would unfailingly spread throughout the whole of society.

The Church is already the reign of God mysteriously present in this world.

By communicating divine life to men and women who are searching for God, Christ reign on earth as he does in Heaven. The focal point of this kingdom is the Eucharist. There Christ the King sits on his throne of mercy waiting to guide us into His unending kingdom. He is The Way, the only Truth and the Way to life eternal.

A true culture of peace and justice cannot be established without the reign of truth and love, without the reign of Christ who *is* Truth and Love. Nations and individuals try; they seek to convince the world to do it their way. The results are evident all around us, in every wounded and broken person; each angry nation striking out against their neighbour; in every wife beaten, every child with broken body and heart; all these evils, and many more like them are what thrives when anyone other than Christ reigns. Who will be your King? Who is it reigning in our words and deeds, in our relationships with others? “Look at the fruits” is what the Son of Man will tell us on that day of Judgment. We know by their fruits.