

*My Kingdom is not of this world*

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There seems to be an unwritten rule on the two Collects for *The President of the United States and all in Civil Authority* found on pages 17 and 18 of Morning Prayer. The rule is, that we pray one Collect if we are a fan of the president -the one that calls the President God's servant, and the other if we are not so happy with him-the one that commends the nation to the care of God, and that he and all civil servants conform to God's will. And so we are left with the difficult decision of which to pray. Yet we do well to remember the beauty of the Prayer Book is that it is a product of the ages, that it was written with no particular political program in mind and that it has been used by people of all generations, of all political leanings, and even of different Christian traditions. These two Collects should remind us of the revelation and power of God, of His power over all things, rather than our own attempts at judging the souls of politicians and political parties.

On this Christ the King Sunday we would do well to look at the first Collect which begins, *O Lord, our heavenly Father, the high and mighty Ruler of the Universe*. Christ the King Sunday was instituted as a day set aside to remember that Jesus Christ reveals to us that He is a King. When Pilate judges Jesus Christ, our Lord confesses that he is indeed a king, yet not just an earthly king, but a king whose kingdom *is not of this world*. Why does Jesus say this? Because He is truly as the Collect says *the high and mighty ruler of the Universe*. The Roman Church goes so far as to call this Sunday *Christ the King of the Universe Sunday*. So on this Sunday we celebrate Christ's rule and governance over all of creation. And yet it really puts things into perspective when we remember that this same *Ruler and King of the Universe* gave Himself as a sacrifice *for the sins the whole world*. When we think of kings and monarchs, governors and politicians, we think of those who are above and over us as superiors and masters, we often forget that they are servants. How curious it is that Christ *King of the Universe* is the suffering servant, the bearer of burdens, and the one who gave *His life as a ransom for many*.

The next phrase of the Collect tells us more about Christ. We pray to this Ruler and King of the Universe, *who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth*. We are taught as children that Christ beholds everything in the heaven and on earth. We are reminded in the prophets that nothing escapes His sight and penetrating vision. Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Luke *there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed*. St. Paul writes *nothing is hidden from God's sight*. With this in mind, when we pray *Most heartily we beseech thee with thy favour to behold and bless thy servant The President, and all others in authority*, we are putting the President and all civil servants in their proper place. Christ sees all and knows all and so we are especially concerned to supplicate His mercy for those who are set in

authority over us. No creature or man escapes God's vision, and no ruler or king does either. Kings and rulers will be judged by God on how faithfully they carried out God's will and kept His commandments, for *to whom much is given much will be required*. Since they act in God's stead to rule and govern us for the promotion of goodness, we are called to pray for our President and all in Civil Authority. We remember too that no office of the land is outside of God's sight. But, most importantly, we remember that whoever fills an office to govern, that man or woman is called to be a servant of God's goodness.

Now we may think this is idealistic to say that the president and all other civil servants are servants of God, but it is the truth of Holy Scripture. St. Paul reminds us in his Epistle to the Romans *there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God*. St. Paul even goes so far as to say that a ruler is *a minister of God to [the people] for good*. Therefore, we must continually remind ourselves and remind our rulers whose servants they are. No one who rules or governs on earth, rules or governs without God's allowance and permission. So rulers are not just our servants, they are most importantly God's servants, and they will be judged by how well or poorly they have followed God's will and commandments. We must pray for our leaders, *that they be [filled with the grace and wisdom of the Holy Spirit], that they may always incline to [God's] will, and walk in [His] way*. But let us remember that regardless of the collect we pray at Morning Prayer, we are praying for the continual conversion of our leaders and governments. And by so doing, we are enthroning our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe over our nation and in our hearts and minds; and we will begin to learn a right way of understanding the government, the world and the universe.

Our duty then as Christians and Christian citizens, is not just to vote, but to pray. We must pray before we vote, pray after we vote, and continue to pray. How can the political parties of the United States unite themselves? They can do so by praying. Maybe the reason why our country is so polarized is because we have forgotten to pray. Maybe we have forgotten that Jesus Christ is King. Perhaps if we paid more attention to the Kingship of Christ then our people would be more inclined to join us in prayer. What we can do, even if few others are joining us, is to engage in serious intercessory prayer for our nation. We can pray that our people might find Revival. We can pray for repentance, we can pray for conversion, we can pray for men to feel after God and find Him once again in Jesus Christ our Lord. We can pray that having found Him, they might share His Spirit with their neighbors. We can pray that our nation might be filled once again with God-fearing people. And then, who knows, if Christ is our Head and we are His people, we might become so united that we won't even need political parties. We shall be one in Christ, one with each other, and one in hope of our journey to the Kingdom that matters most. Amen.