

## **THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING (A) JESUS AS SHEPHERD AND KING**

Today is the last Sunday of the liturgical year. As we come to the close of the year, we are reminded that everything will end before the presence of Christ. All activities, whether commerce or business, entertainment, leadership, politics, family matters, will be put before the Lord for final assessment. As the second reading is saying that at the end, Christ will deliver the kingdom to God, after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

The kingship of Jesus is everlasting and has no end. He is a king who sits on the throne of His ancestor David. The Angel Gabriel told Mary, "Look! you are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name Him Jesus. The Lord will give Him the throne of His ancestor David; He will rule the House of Jacob forever, and His reign will have no end," (Lk. 1:31-33). The kingship of Christ became known during His trial before Pilate, and on the cross. Pilate wrote and fixed on the cross, "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews," (Jn. 19:19). The repentant thief recognized Jesus as King and told Him, "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom," (Lk. 23:42).

We have earthly kings and kingdoms, but very often they do not last. Earthly kingship is most of the time associated with or characterised by the show of power and authority, enslavement of subjects, acquisition of wealth and riches, rivalry and intimidation, and dispensing justice. It is also characterised by pride, and sometimes arrogance.

But the kingship of Christ is totally different from the earthly one. Jesus the King is like a shepherd who cares for his flock. He does not lord it over the subjects; He seeks their welfare and so takes them to green pastures and near restful waters. He does not scatter them but looks for those who stray from the flock. He rescues them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of cloud and thick darkness.

Unlike the earthly king, Jesus binds up the crippled, strengthens the weak, heals the sick, and the sleek and the strong, He watches over. All peoples and nations will present themselves before Him. Thus His kingdom is an eternal and universal kingdom; "a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of justice, love and peace" (Preface).

How can I experience this everlasting kingdom? I want to know the truth and be holy; I am looking for peace and love; How can I enter the kingdom and see the face of God? I have to behave like a sheep and not a goat. Sheep

are believed to be gentle and innocent, while goats are known to be very destructive. I have to take Jesus as my Shepherd and King and follow Him. I have to hear His voice all the time and be faithful to Him.

Do I accept Jesus as my King at all? Is the kingship of Jesus relevant in the modern world? Nobody wants to be instructed by Jesus. We are all kings and we feel we do not need Jesus to rule over us. I make my own laws and I follow them. We are ruled now by gadgets, entertainment and sports, by our own desires and wills whether good or bad.

Since we have created kings for ourselves, the other person does not count. We do not think about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison. We do not show compassion and we do not care what happens to the other person. We tend to care when disaster strikes, but most of time we care less about the less privileged ones.

Our Shepherd and King is full of love and compassion. His wish is that we remain among the flock so that He guides us along the right path and prepares a table before the sight of our enemies. He does not want us to experience eternal punishment but eternal life so it is up to me to accept that or not. If I accept Him as my Shepherd and King, then eternal life will be mine. In fact, Jesus today reminds us of our own parish mission statement: "To live Christ's love by serving others, especially the poor, neglected, and suffering".

## **SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING (C)**

### **HE HAS TRANSFERRED US TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON**

Today marks the official close of the Year of Mercy. We celebrate the solemnity of the kingship of Christ, as the King of the universe. He sits on the throne of His ancestor David. David was anointed king in Hebron. He ruled seven years in Hebron and thirty-three more in Jerusalem, unifying all the tribes of Israel. Mary was told, "Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name Him Jesus. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David; He will rule the House of Jacob for ever, and His reign will have no end," (Lk. 1:31-33).

Jesus was not proclaimed king when He sat on a throne, but when He was nailed to the cross. "Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed on the cross; 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'", (Jn. 19:19). The 'good' thief on the cross recognized the kingship of Jesus and said "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk.23:42).

Earthly kingship is associated with sitting on a throne, crowns on the head, sceptres in hand, exercising authority, show of power, and dispensing justice. One felt safe and cared for when a good king ruled. The nature of the earthly king was described to the Israelites by God when they asked for a king for the first time. (1Sam. 8:11-18).

But the kingship of Jesus is totally different from the earthly kingship. His kingdom has no end; 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; and all things were created through Him and for Him; and in Him all things hold together. His kingdom is a kingdom of love, peace and justice. Jesus is a king who does not condemn and discriminate. His kingdom is for all. As a king, He came to serve and not to be served.

As we celebrate this feast we are reminded of what we have become through the kingship of Christ. Through our baptism, we have become heirs to the kingdom. God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have

redemption, the forgiveness of sins. We are no more slaves of sin. We have become special people with special dignity.

Do you know that you are wonderfully made, and redeemed with the precious blood of the King of kings and Lord of lords? Do you cherish your status or dignity as a christian? Do you feel proud to be part of the kingdom of Christ? No, because we do not know how important we are as christians. We do not know the treasure we have. For some of us being a catholic christian is just to be identified with the group called christians and not to be part of the kingdom. Maybe we are not aware who we are, “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, so that you may announce the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were ‘no people’ but now you are God’s people; you had ‘not received mercy’ but now you have received mercy,” (1Pet. 2:9-10). In this year of mercy we have heard a lot about the mercy of God; how many have seized the opportunity to seek His mercy?

Do we accept Jesus as the king of our lives? The thief recognized Him as such and when he expressed it, he gained salvation. If we accept Him as our king then how are we to live our lives? A royal lives a dignified life. He tries to be impeccable, and lives a good exemplary life. He is a role model and a mentor. As heirs to the kingdom of Christ, we are to promote peace and love. Are we conscious of that?

It is time to surrender ourselves to Jesus to rule over us and do away with the many material things and pleasure which have become lords of our lives. It is time we think like the good thief and have the desire to be in Christ’s kingdom.

## ALL SAINTS

We remember the saints who have gone before us. They are witnesses to our faith, and give us assurance of seeing God face to face.

I happen to see Moses, and I told him how I wish I can be in that white clothes. Then he said; you can. Then I said, but you are special. Then he told me, "I am not special; have you forgotten that I was a murderer and I ran away, and when I was called by God to lead the people I told Him I do not know how to speak, He held my hand and led me.

-Then Jeremiah came in and said, "do you remember I told the Lord I am child? Yes He held my hand as a child"

-Isaiah came in - "I thought I was going to die when I saw the Lord, but He touched my lips with a hot coal"

-Peter appeared, and asked what was happening? I said, "you were lucky to be an apostle". The he said, "my friends and I promised to die with our Master, but we ran away, we denied Him, and even after resurrection, we decided to go back to our former way of life.

-Mary Magdalene - I was considered the worst sinner and hopeless, but I wept, and was consoled by the Lord

-Stephen - I was stoned to death

- They all said we try to reflect on what the Lord said - to be poor in spirit, merciful, pure of heart, seek peace, be interested in righteousness
- You too can put on the white garment; persevere
- "Things are not the same as your time," I said. They told me to look back at their time and today, nothing has changed. There is The need to focus on Jesus. They all said in unison.
- Mary came in and said, we are ready to intercede for you so have faith and hope. Show love, and let nothing distract your attention. Learn to be humble and obedient to what your Master asks you to do.
- Do I want to be with them? Do you want to be with them? I should be a child and allow Jesus to hold my hand, as the saints allowed Him to hold their hands.