

St Pius & St Anthony Feast of Christ the King Year C Luke 23:35-43

We are all used to Christmas parades, especially at this time of year, (*by the way, Calvert City's is Dec 6-GR festival of lights every night now*). Common to all Christmas parades, is how they are all spectacular ways of introducing to us, someone special, (and what every child is waiting to see), not the Grand Marshall, but at the very end of the long line of floats, after all the lights, sounds, sirens, and songs, the star of the show – Santa. In a way, we are going through something similar with today's liturgical feast, if we review the whole long year of various celebrations of faith, and now coming to its end, we are presented with our Savior who came to visit us, Christ our King! I'd say we are crowning the year off, by focusing on just who our Savior is – Our Everything! And that is what it means to call someone King! They are everything! The Book of Revelation refers to Jesus (Lord and Lamb) five times as the Alpha and Omega (*first and last letters of Greek Alphabet*), the Beginning and the End-Source & Summit, Font & Finality of our lives (that is an all-inclusive title-Revelation 1:8, 1:17; 2:8; 21:6, 22:13). This is the same meaning as calling Christ, King – He rules everything.

Similarly, St Paul in his letters, calls Jesus, our “all and in all” in Colossians, 3:11, and in Ephesians 3:18-19, “the breadth and length and height and depth” – “the fullness of God” for us. All ways of saying, Jesus is ‘everything’ to us – *or should be!*

And what does our King look like? Well, that is the purpose of today's feast. To showcase our King – and isn't He unique? Do you remember the old catchphrase from various science fiction movies, always said when the Martian Aliens, show up, **“Take me to your leader”**. (It was in Will Robinson's *Lost in Space*, also in episodes of *Dr Who*). But the phrase was **“Take me to your leader”**. A little bit of history trivia, is that on NASA's *first human orbit mission around earth (1962) of astronaut John Glenn*, because they weren't exactly sure where he would soft-crash land back to earth – they feared it could be in area of isolated south pacific sea islands, they had those words **‘I come in peace – Take me to your leader’** translated into seven languages for Glenn to show any island tribe that may seize him – what might they have thought seeing a man in puffy silver clothes exit a capsule falling from sky? But I think of today's feast that way – Take me to your Leader - it's an introduction into what type of King we have in Jesus!

Jesus is a king like no other. He appears and rules like no one would have expected. So, on this Feast of Christ the King, let's take a moment to see what He looks like. Well, Jesus' crown was not a padded, luxurious and bejeweled crown. No, he wore a natural, rugged plant crown of thorns – what did that mean but

that he felt his rule – he wasn't afraid of suffering with his people the burden of ruling (Matthew 27:29; John 19:2) How about his throne? He wasn't carried on a four-handled movable litter (palanquin chair). No, He carried his own royal chair – the cross (Jn 19:16-17). Even when He did have a transport ride, parading into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He did not enter with a pretentious show of power on a mighty war stallion. No, he rode a simple and meek donkey (Mt 21:2). How about a regal robe of exotic linen and silk? No, His last appearance, Jesus barely had a strip of cloth to cover him, after he surrendered (*or he let go as it was stolen from him*) His tunic because Jesus did not need any flash of fashion. And what about holding a gilded scepter (stick-wand of power)? Jesus' scepter is no sword or stake, but rather a tightly rolled up towel, he uses to wipe, wash our feet with (Jn13:5) ***What a king-leader we are taken with! A perfect example of servant-leadership?***

So on this feast of Christ our King, we can take a moment to study how Jesus does exercise his leadership? The world hadn't seen it before – Even Jesus had said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36).

I notice that Jesus leads uniquely by 1) always serving others, 2) always being personal- relational, and 3) always leading by love, through everything (that is what love does – 1 Cor 12 – “It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”)

Looking at Jesus kingship at the end, first, He ***always served others***. Just thinking of His last evening here, what did He do but take the time to set up-to institute our sacrament of His ongoing presence- the ritual of Lord's Supper - Mass – (and as if not enough was going on for Him to accomplish on that last night – He also washed the feet of His apostles. He served, even in the moment of his arrest, he took a minute to heal the soldier's cut off ear (Lk 22:51). Always a focus on serving others – “He came to serve, not be served” - He taught in Mk 10:45. He came to save others not save himself (didn't we hear that taunt three times from people in the gospel – rulers, soldiers and criminal ‘Save your self’ --Luke 23:33, 37, 39) He came to lay down His Life for His sheep (Jn 10:10 ‘that we may have life’)

Secondly, Jesus is also ***always personal***, even in his own hurt and painful experience, Jesus took time to be personal – He even allowed Judas to get a last embrace from him, even a kiss (Mark 14:45) as Judas was betraying Him. On His walk to Calvary, Jesus stopped to talk to women on roadside while carrying His cross (Lk 23:28-31). He took a personal moment with Peter to gently remind him, even though Peter'd deny him, Jesus nudged him to be sure to forgive himself and get back to leading/supporting the other apostles (Luke 22:32). Jesus is always personal like that - he wants our relationship, to encounter us in our heart or His!

And thirdly, Jesus **always about leading by love**. Always compassionate toward us and concerned – He loves us though it all (*Jn 13:1 'loved them to the end'*).

In summary we can see Jesus' unique style of kingship in two spoken in and around this reading (uniquely they are both only found in Luke, for whoever is listening). The first statement is Luke 23:34, where Jesus calls to the Father, for our universal forgiveness, even while we are still opposing him (Lk 23:34 'Father forgive them they know not what they do'-- Romans 5:8 reveals what is up with this "God proves love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us")

And the second conversation we hear from the very Cross of Jesus today, with the criminal beside him. This repentant criminal cares, he reciprocates Christ's love, supports Jesus against the spiteful comment of the other criminal. He is acknowledging Jesus as His King, asking Jesus to simply think of him too in the end. And Jesus, our servant and saving King, assures him – "I have you, in just a little bit (this day) you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). What a king, what a king we have to follow!