

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King C/2007

When we pray the Our Father, we say “Your kingdom come”. But, what kind of kingdom is it? To this question, Jesus has answered once and for all before Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world”. And yet, it is in this world that his kingdom starts and he has to reign over us..

The fact that Jesus said that his kingdom is not of this world means that, even if he is a king, his kingdom cannot be reduced to earthly empires and human governments. He is not a king like our presidents or heads of State; he is a king *sui generis*, a king in his own way. All today’s readings reveal to us some features of this particular way of being king.

First of all, let us remember that the exercise of power has always been something very difficult in human history, in the past as it is today. The performance of many kings in the exercise of their leadership has often been below the expectations people placed in them. It has been proven that the accession to power through heredity does not mean necessarily having all the qualities required in order to be a good leader.

In the presence of so much disappointment from the chosen kings of Israel, God raised David to be the model of kings in Israel, a king according to his heart to the point that the Messiah would come from his offspring. What makes David special is that, unlike his predecessors, he was animated not only with a deep love of the Lord, but also with a sincere zeal for his people. David was a gatherer and a true shepherd of God’s people. In today’s first reading, it is all about his crowning as king over all the tribes of Israel.

In order to better understand this episode, we have to bear in mind that at that time Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the South with the only tribe of Judas to which David belonged and, the North, with the remainder of Israel of which Saul was king.

Given the ability of David’s command, his courage and bravery in war, even the tribes of the North wanted him to reign over them. That is why the elders of the northern kingdom went to see him in Hebron and convinced him to accept to reign over them. As they reached an agreement before the Lord, they anointed him king of the whole of Israel, reconciling both the north and the south.

Soon after the death of David, in spite of the good leadership of Solomon and his immediate successors, the country split again and became insignificant on the world scale. But, many in Israel dreamt again and again of the restoration of the kingdom of David. They prayed God day by day to send them a Messiah who would reunite them again as one people.

Why are we told this story on this feast of Christ the king? It is because Jesus is God’s reply to the prayers and the expectations of Israel. Jesus is the Messiah and the king expected, but ignored by his own. By his mission, his teaching and action, he has brought men and women of all races, languages and nations into one people, and made them God’s children. He has incarnated the model of David’s kingdom in everything he did.

St Paul presents Jesus in his letter to the Colossians as the one whose kingdom we are transferred in, and in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of our sins. His kingdom obeys other laws and rules different than human. That kingdom we have to start right now by living the values of fraternal love and humble service toward one another. For that reason we cannot celebrate the feast of Christ the king without asking ourselves questions about the way we exercise our small powers as father, mother, parents, wife, husband, boss, manager... How good a spiritual leader are you over your family, your coworkers, etc...?

In the middle of Jesus' kingdom stands the cross. As St Paul says, everything has been reconciled in him, making peace by the blood of his cross. The crowds that looked at Jesus on the cross were astonished and could not understand, but the other criminal who was crucified with him and opened his heart to him discovered his kingdom. He said, "Remember me when you come in your kingdom". And Jesus replied, "I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise". When we give our heart to Jesus, when we are forgiven by Jesus, it is today, and not tomorrow, that a new road in our life is open forever. The story of this man is the story of each one of us. Whatever we might have done in the past, even where society has condemned us, Jesus is able to forgive us when we turn to him and ask forgiveness.

Christ is the king of life. In fact, the Gospel does not present Jesus' passion as a failure, but as a victory of life. St Paul says that he is the first born of all creation. In him were created all things and in him all things hold together. All those who approach Jesus in truth and in spirit receive grace over grace. Christ is king because he is the first to enter into life with his humanity and he wants to share that life with us. He is the shepherd who stands at the head of his sheep to lead them to the abundance of life in the kingdom of his Father. That is why, Jesus challenges us to protect life and to spread the culture of life, as proclaimed by Christ the King.

Christ is the king of peace. As a matter of fact, the cross is a crossroad where God and humanity, men and women, meet in order to build a new world based on the values of the kingdom of peace. That is the reason in the cross of Jesus men and women of every race, tongue, nation and culture are gathered, and reconciled. The cross is a sign of reconciliation, an invitation to get rid of violence and hatred. The victory of Christ is the victory of love and reconciliation. Let us pray that we choose to make Jesus the king of our lives and submit our lives to him. Let us work for the triumph of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of peace, reconciliation and joy. May God bless you on this blessed day of the kinship of Jesus so that you recognize him as your king and Lord!

2 Samuel 5, 1-3; Colossians 1, 12-20; Luke 23, 35-43



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