

CHRIST THE KING C/2010

In this celebration of the kingship of Christ, all the readings invite us to reflect on the leadership of our Lord with regard to his identity and his mission as our savior. They enjoin us to examine the particular role Jesus plays in human history and in our lives as he leads us to the kingdom of his Father.

The first reading describes the beginning of the kingship of David as he was anointed and established as king of Israel in Hebron. It describes the circumstances that preceded David's crowning as a shepherd chosen by God to guide his people. It highlights, in particular, his role as the gatherer of his people in whom all the tribes of Israel recognized themselves.

The setting of this text tells us something about the nature of a king. A king has something in common with the people he is leading. That is why the elders of the tribes of Israel reminded David that he was the bone of their flesh. In spite of this commonality with the people, however, the king receives his mission from above. It is for that reason that the elders reminded him also that the Lord has decreed that he shall shepherd his people and be the commander of Israel.

All these traits will be found in Jesus. In that sense, we can say that David was the archetype of Christ who will fulfill to the best the role and the leadership expected from the kings of Israel. Jesus is God's reply to the prayers and the expectations of Israel. He is the fulfillment of the dreams of Jewish people. In everything he did, Jesus has incarnated to perfection the model of David's kingdom and surpassed it. He is the messiah expected by the people of Israel; he is the savior of the world.

Like David, and beyond him, Jesus has brought into one people, the men and women of all races, languages and nations and made them God's children. He has made us all share in the inheritance of the holy ones in heaven.

All that helps us understand why for St Paul Jesus is the one whose kingdom we are transferred in and in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of our sins. In the ancient world, in fact, when a country won a victory over another, all the citizens of that defeated country were transferred to the conqueror's land. Just as a mighty conqueror transferred the population of a subdued land to another, God has transferred us from the realm of sin into the realm of holiness.

When St Paul says that God has transferred us into his own kingdom, he means that through Jesus we belong forever to the kingdom of God. We are transferred from the power of darkness to light, because in Jesus, God has given us a light by which to live and by which to die. In Jesus, we are transferred from perdition to redemption, because without God's action in Jesus we would have remained slaves of sin and death. In Jesus we are transferred from condemnation to forgiveness, because thanks to Jesus our sins are forgiven.

As it appears, Jesus is more than a mere man. He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation in whom, through whom, and for whom all things in heaven and on earth were created. All this means that Jesus is not only the beginning, the end and the goal of

creation, but also the power that holds the whole world together. With him we live, and without him we are lost.

Moreover, Christ is the head of the body, which is the church. In fact, the Church is an organ through which Jesus acts and expresses himself. If that is the case, it means also that without Jesus, the Church becomes incapable of telling the truth, incapable of acting correctly and incapable of deciding about its direction. As Christ is at the origin of all living things, he is the source of the Church's life and being. Because of the resurrection, Jesus is alive forevermore. He is not a dead hero or a founder of the past, but a true and living presence. He is Lord forever.

His kingdom obeys other laws and rules than the laws and rules of the kingdoms of this world. 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 of those who looked at him on the cross were astonished and could not understand, but only one criminal who was crucified with him understood. He opened his heart to Jesus and discovered his kingdom. He said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom". And Jesus replied, "I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise".

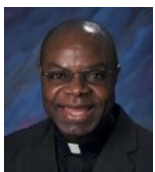
That is what happens to us when we give our heart to Jesus and his kingdom. At that time a new road is open in our life forever. That is why, the story of this man is the story of each one of us. It means the possibility of being forgiven and of being given a new opportunity to know God and to live with him in his kingdom. Here, what counts the most is not our past, but the today of God's grace which makes the today of our life more important than tomorrow and yesterday. That is the today of God's grace that gives life beyond our sins.

As such, the kingdom of Jesus is a kingdom of life. In fact, the Gospel does not present Jesus' passion as a failure, but as a victory over death and a triumph of life. Christ is the first to enter into life; he wants to share that life with us. For that reason, Jesus challenges us to protect life and to spread the culture of life.

The kingdom of Jesus is a kingdom of peace. In fact, 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.

Christ the king is asking us what we do with the power we have on a large and small scale as father, mother, parent, wife, husband, boss, manager, etc. How good a spiritual leader are we over our family, our coworkers, our business, our companies, etc? Let us 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 all!

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



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