

Christ the King Sunday in Ordinary Time B2018

The readings of this solemnity talk about the kingship of Jesus. They show us what type of King he is and how his kingship affects us. They also invite us to submit ourselves to his kingdom as we receive him in our life, in our family and in our world.

The first reading describes the vision of the prophet Daniel about the coming of the Son of Man. It refers in particular to his reception of glory and his dominion over nations and peoples. It recalls how his dominion will be eternal and his kingship indestructible.

What is behind this text is the idea that the Son of Man will return one day as announced by the prophets and promised by the Scriptures. There is also the idea that the return of the Lord will be a time of his crowning in the face of all the peoples and nations of the earth. The last idea is related to the truth that God's kingdom is eternal.

This text allows us to understand what is at stake in today's Gospel as it speaks of Jesus' kingship. First of all, the Gospel opens up with the question asked of Jesus by Pilate at the moment of his passion, whether he was a King or not. Then, it gives Jesus' response in a double instance where he recognizes that he is truly a King, but at the same time, his kingdom is not of this world.

The Gospel finishes with Jesus' declaration that to be King is the reason why he was born and that he came into the world in order to testify to the truth. Finally, the Gospel reports the words of Jesus affirming that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to his voice.

What do we learn from today's readings? Today, I want to talk about Jesus' kingship. Let me start by referring to human experience and world history. In fact, when we talk about a kingdom, we think of a monarch who reigns on a territory, who has people subjected to him and on whom he exercises his power, who has a throne assigned to him and which he has to defend, who has a military might destined to protect him, his power and his territory.

Those elements seem to be absent in the case of Jesus' kingship. It seems that Jesus' kingdom is of another genre. It obeys other criteria than those we normally use in order to determine Monarchies, Empires and Republics. His kingdom is invisible in nature, unlimited in territory, unimposing in power and eternal in scope. Negatively, I can say that Jesus' kingdom is not a geographic reality, but rather spiritual. It does not aim at conquering territories, but rather the hearts of people so that they turn to God.

The specificity of Jesus' Kingdom has been evidenced in his own life and ministry. How? For instance, unlike the kings of this world who run for honor or power; he never sought to occupy the first place in his ministry and life. Instead of commanding, he was obedient until death on the cross. Instead of being served, he served all by his words and acts. He even washed the feet of his disciples so that they, too, do the same toward their fellows. As the excited people wanted to make him a king, he fled to the point of disappointing not only his disciples, but also all those who saw in him a Messiah according to the Jewish political expectations.

Unfortunately, some have attempted in human history to make the kingdom of Jesus visible in this world through the search for temporal power. This is the case of the

pontifical states or the establishment of the Kingdom of Jesus among the Amerindians in Paraguay by the Jesuits in the 16th century.

At times, the triumph of Christ has been identified with the triumph of the Church's leaders on earth. Even today some keep fighting in order to make the Church triumphant in the world. Others strive to ally the Church with some political parties without foreseeing the danger of doing so. Partisanship jeopardizes the independence of the Church and even reduces the Gospel to a political program.

As J. Paul II said, the church proposes; she imposes nothing. The church asks, and if necessary the Church demands to be able to make its evangelical proposal in public; and the church claims the right, as civil society institution, to be a vigorous partner in the public debate. But the church does not seek legal establishment, nor does it ally itself with any political party.

That vision helps understand why Jesus' kingdom has nothing to do with human power, triumph or dominion. When human history is finished and all the kingdoms and empires of the earth have collapsed, we still have Jesus. History has given us already a hint of that truth: empires have come and gone; but Jesus has remained eternal. For instance, the Roman Empire has existed and gone; the French Empire has existed and has gone; the German Empire has existed and has gone; the Ottoman Empire has existed and has gone; the Aztec Empire has existed and has gone.

Jesus' kingdom is essentially destined to bear witness to the truth of God. In biblical sense, something is true not only when it is conformed to the real, but when in its evidence and clarity to the intellect, it leads to the encounter with God. In that sense, we understand why Jesus says that he was born and sent into the world in order to testify to the truth. That truth is that God is our Father; he loves us and wants us to be his children. Because we are his children, we belong to his kingdom, which is the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have become his sons and daughters.

The growth of that Kingdom does not depend on human might, but on our conversion of hearts. By letting the truth of Jesus' Gospel guide our lives and actions, we declare our belonging to his Kingdom. We belong to Jesus' kingdom when we live as he did and put ourselves at the service of one another for the glory of God. We may pretend to do things for Jesus, but it will not help us if we do not do it with him, as he has done it with humility and the love of the truth.

Let us, then, ask Jesus to help us accept his kingship over our hearts and lives. May he conquer our thoughts and actions and teach us to love and serve him by loving and serving one another! May God bless you all!



Daniel 7: 13-14; Revelation 1: 5-8; John 18: 33b-37

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