

Solemnity of Jesus Christ the King of the Universe B2021

Instead of giving you a classical homily as I often do, I want to embark you in a spiritual journey with the goal of reaffirming our origins as God's beloved children, saved by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, and called to share in the heavenly banquet by the end of our pilgrimage on earth. Today is the first step in this journey that will take all the weeks of Advent and Christmas

This spiritual journey is willed by our Archdiocese. Facing the increasing secularization of the world, the loss of fundamental Christian worldview that has supported our society up to now and its consequences on the life and the morale of many people of our time, we need to re-acquire a biblical worldview; we need to hear again the "Kerygma", the good news of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

That is why in these days our Archdiocese is engaged in a process of discernment of the will God with a purpose of moving our apostolate from maintenance to mission, from a pastoral of sacramentalization to a pastoral of evangelization, from a faith based purely on the reception of sacraments to a faith based on witness of life.

Is this a condemnation of what has been done up to now? No; it is the recognition that our society having changed so much in its structure, faith based on sacraments is not enough to transform our world. The pastoral ministry of sacramentalization, indeed, nurtures the people who still have faith. Christ is present in the sacraments: in baptism, in the Eucharist, and so forth. The sacramental pastoral ministry is good for those who have that faith and still come to the Church to meet Christ present in the sacraments.

But, how can we reach out to all the others who do not have faith and those who have left the Church? Those people certainly need to be evangelized. The pastoral of evangelization, then, aims at bringing the gospel to so many people who do not know it or have abandoned the Church. The problem, however, is that we cannot evangelize without personal conversion. In fact, in order to transform people into the Disciples of Christ, to win them for Christ, we must first have personally attended Jesus "School of life". We must have developed an intimacy with him, have allowed him to instruct, form, and shape us so that he can truly send out his disciples.

This solemnity of Christ the King brings to our awareness that we have been created by God to be his children, to be drawn into the very life of the Trinity and to enjoy eternal happiness. But, that happiness has been destroyed by the reality of sin. In order to save us, God sent his Son Jesus into our world to be our Savior. In him we have been delivered from sin and called to enter into our inheritance as beloved sons and daughters of God.

As we celebrate the kingship of Jesus, we implore his sovereignty over us and over our world. When we usually 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.

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. Jesus' kingdom

is not a geographic reality, but rather a spiritual one. 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. 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 with 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.

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. The Roman Empire has existed and has 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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