

Thirty-Fourth or Last Sunday in Ordinary Time B Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

"ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?" Beloved today is the Last Sunday of our Liturgical Year (B), the 34th Sunday of the Year. Traditionally, on this day, the whole Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the universe. Yes! Jesus is not only the King of the Jews, he's the king of all – acknowledged or unacknowledged (cf. Acts 10:36).

WAS JESUS EVER CROWNED KING OR ARE CHRISTIANS SIMPLY MAKING IT UP? Beloved, consider the contents of the First Reading (Dan 7:13-14). Daniel was not a Christian and he received this revelation recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures which, like the New Testament, is inspired in all its parts. It is clearly a *revelation of Christ's kingship – his coronation as the King of all*:

I saw one like a Son of man [*evidently, imagery of God the Son*] coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached the Ancient One [*evidently, imagery of God the Father*] and was presented before him, the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away; his kingship shall not be destroyed.

This revelation is consistent with the New Testament as follows: "...Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (*Phil 2:8-11*)". The Church professes this faith sacramentally especially during the Easter Vigil when, in marking the Paschal Candle, the priest says, "Christ yesterday, and today; the beginning and the End; Alpha and Omega; all ages belong to him and all time; to him be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen". *Indeed, Jesus is "the King of Kings and the Lord of lords" (Rev 17:14)*. Hence he declared, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations..." (Matt 28:18-19). That is why the Church of Christ has the inalienable divine right to exist anywhere; she doesn't need any human permission from any county, state or country.

WHAT SORT OF KINGDOM DOES JESUS HAVE? Is he like our presidents of different countries? Is he comparable to Emperor Caesar of the Roman Empire? Certainly not! Unlike these presidents, kings, and emperors, he says, "My kingdom does not belong to this world... my kingdom is not here." So the kingdom of Jesus is not something transient, something earthly that can pass away. Empires rise and fall but Christ's kingdom is imperishable. It needs to be clarified that even the Church is not equivalent to God's kingdom. Nevertheless, "one may not separate the kingdom from the Church... the Church is ... ordered toward the kingdom of God of which she is the seed, sign and instrument" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 18). As Christ puts it, "Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21). It is something essentially spiritual. St Paul says, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable' (1Cor 15:50). Hence Jesus declares, 'My kingdom is not here'.

WHAT SORT OF KING IS JESUS THEN? This is the point of the Second Reading (Rev 1:5-8): "Jesus Christ is the faithful witness", [not 'a faithful witness']...and he "loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever". In the Pilgrim Church, God's people are visibly a "kingdom of priests"; "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1Pet 2:9). The ultimate kingdom of Christ is the Triumphant Church (cf. Rev 7:9-17). Christ purifies all in his kingdom with his blood. So his kingship is unique; no earthly king can free us from sin. Above all, Jesus is God; "the Alpha and the Omega...the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty". Yet he serves rather than to be served and gives his life as a ransom for his subjects.

FINALLY, WHAT CHALLENGES FLOW FROM THIS CELEBRATION? First Jesus is the King of truth, justice, peace, and love. Let us always bow to his Lordship by practicing transparency and love. When we find ourselves in positions of authority, let us be servants to all; let us resist the spirit of pride and pomposity. Let Jesus always be the king of our hearts, our families, places of work, schools, relationships, and of our marriage life. He wants to transform us from mere human solidarity into divine encounter: "I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). What a privilege to have Jesus as our king! Certainly, "Happy the people whose God is the Lord!" (Ps 144:15).