

**CHRIST THE KING/XXI TRINITY 2015**  
**SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH**  
**FATHER CRAIG LOONEY**  
**COLOSSIANS 1.12 St. JOHN 18.33**

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Jesus is our Sovereign King! He is in the words of the hymn we just sang our Benign King. He is kind, approachable, gentle, sympathetic, compassionate, caring and benevolent. He is not out to do us harm.

Those are qualities we would like to see in our human leaders whether they are kings or queens or elected leaders like prime ministers or presidents. Some of our leaders hit the mark...others sadly do not.

Father Martin Hellriegel was a Roman Catholic priest who was pastor of Holy Cross Church on the outskirts of Saint Louis, Missouri, for forty years. Even after his retirement and almost totally blind, he continued to celebrate Mass daily and cheerfully welcome visitors to the rectory

Father Hellriegel wrote the hymn *To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King* in 1941. He had become increasingly alarmed at the rise of fascism in his native Germany. He wrote the hymn he hoped would inspire people to embrace Jesus as their Lord and King.

Jesus is not like any ordinary human king and he is not an elected government official. He has done for us what no government or political party could possibly do...he has done what God alone could do...he has made us Saints of God.

Saint Paul tells us in today's Epistle that God our Father has reserved for us a place in the kingdom of Light; rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son, who has set us free from our sins.

In the hymn we call Jesus our Sovereign King. Sovereign means absolute...and yes, Jesus is an absolute monarch. But his kingship...his sovereignty...is a welcoming kingship of service and redemption we should all embrace without hesitation, just as Father Hellriegel's compelling hymn invites us to do.

The Old Testament portrays God as THE King who loves his people and sent judges to rule over them and encourage them to be faithful. In the First Book of Kings the people complained to Samuel they wanted a human

king just like everyone else. They wanted a tactile, tangible, visible king.

God told Samuel to give the people what they wanted. He told Samuel, "They are not rejecting you; they are rejecting me." He also told Samuel to tell the people they won't like their human king. He will be dishonest and lie to them and sign treaties with foreign powers.

Samuel told God's people their human kings will send their sons off to war to get killed; others will have to work in the king's fields. Their daughters will have to clean the king's house and make it smell nice. They will have their land confiscated and be made to work for nothing. They will be taxed unfairly and when they complain he will ignore them.

Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925. He hoped it would inspire Christians everywhere "to give Jesus Christ lordship over every aspect of their lives." He wrote that he hoped "the Faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Christ must reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies."

Jesus is the King whose sovereignty over us today's Collect reminds us is gracious and for which we pray will ultimately bring all people of the world together in peace. Peace in the world today appears illusive but it is something we must always pray for and never give up hope.

Saint Paul also tells us our true citizenship is in heaven...the place he says God has reserved for us in the kingdom of Light. The Feast of Christ the King gives us the opportunity to thank God our Father for the gift of eternal life bought for us by his Son.

Next Sunday is All Saints' Day. We will celebrate in words and music the lives of all of the Saints of God, known and unknown, living and deceased, who worked and fought and lived and died for the Lord they loved and knew.

We want to be like them too...like Saint Paul...like Father Martin Hellriegel...and all other Saints of God...and claim Jesus as our Sovereign King

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