

FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING 2019
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
COLOSSIANS 1.12 St. JOHN 18.33

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God is the all-powerful but loving king who always takes care of his people. But that wasn't good enough for them. They wanted a human king they could see...just like everyone else.

About 1000 years before the birth of Christ...the people went to Samuel and demanded he give them a human king. Samuel was upset...but God told him to give the people what they wanted. He said to Samuel, "My people aren't rejecting you...they are rejecting me!"

Samuel gave the people their human king and told them this is what they could expect from their king:

- Your sons will be drafted and sent off to war where they will be killed; he will also make your sons work in the fields.
- Your daughters will have to clean the king's house and make it smell nice for him.
- He will take your land, your servants, your best crops; he will even make you his slaves.
- He will tax you unfairly and when you complain about how badly he treats you he won't listen to you.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. We talk about Jesus as King mostly during the Advent-Christmas seasons and on Palm Sunday...when Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey and we sing, "All glory, laud, and honor, to thee Redeemer King."

Although the Feast of Christ the King is a relatively recent addition to the Church's Liturgical calendar...the feast has its roots in the Old Testament and today's Epistle. Paul writes, "(God) 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."

The Great Fifth Century Patriarch, Cyril of Alexandria, wrote extensively about the union between God the Father and God the Son. His theological language is complex...in terms we can better understand...Jesus and the Father are made of the same stuff...Godstuff. Because of this union...Jesus is King and absolute ruler over everything that was created.

Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925. He wrote a letter he hoped 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."

There is, of course, a major difference between the way human kings and queens relate to the people and the way Jesus does. Because Jesus is fully human...he knows exactly what it means to be a human being. He has experienced all of the joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears we have. Because he is fully God...he has the same knowledge about us the Father has...and he knows what is best for us.

Jesus is our King and Savior...who shows himself to be kind, approachable, gentle, sympathetic, compassionate, caring, and benevolent. He is the King whose sovereignty over us the Collect reminds us is gracious...and we pray all the peoples of the world will see Jesus for who he is...and come together in peace.

Kings and queens have sometimes exercised absolute authority over their subjects. God our Father has given us a King whose sovereignty over us is different than any on earth. Jesus never forces his sovereignty on us...but he promises a place in his kingdom in heaven to those who accept his Kingship and let him reign in their hearts, minds, wills, and bodies.

Our true citizenship...as Saint Paul tells us...lies in heaven. 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, and to renew the pledge in our hearts to follow Jesus our King!

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