

My dear brothers and sisters, on this last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the **Solemnity of Christ the King**. Pope Pius XI established this feast in 1925, to combat the growing secularism and atheism so that all people can identify and recognize Jesus Christ as ruler of all nations and all peoples. In the Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ has been given a variety of names; each name reveals new details about Jesus Christ. Yet no title and no number of titles will ever suffice to adequately express all that Christ is, his beauty, his wisdom, his power and his love. The Early Christians avoided calling Jesus "king", less the title be misunderstood by earthly powers; rather, they chose to call him **'the Lord'**. However, the meaning the Early Christians attached to both titles was the same, which is **there is no power above the power of Jesus**; everyone and everything falls under his dominion. Again, the Early Church professed in the Creed – **"we believe that his kingdom will have no end"** Christ is the King who shares his life with us, Christ is the King who shares his body and blood in the Eucharist with us, Christ is the King who shares his priesthood with us.

Our first reading speaks about **"The coming of the Son of Man"** (the second coming of Christ). The coming of the Son of Man has been described as the end of time by the prophet Daniel (Dan.7:13). At his second coming, Christ will be a king who has power, dominion, glory and kingship to rule over all peoples and nations. Daniel is giving this message of hope to the chosen people who are about to give up so that they will continue the life of faithful service to the end, because they shall overcome! One day, the powerful empire will be destroyed and Israel will receive "dominion, glory and kingship". The prophet announces the final triumph of the Messiah to come. The power of Christ the King far exceeds the power of all the kings on earth put together; it is a power that will last forever. The Messiah is the rightful king of the universe and of our lives. Yet, he does not force himself on us. We have to make a choice - to receive his kingship or not. The responsorial, Psalm 93, also refers to God's kingship. The church applies it to God's kingship as invested in Christ the king.

The second reading from the Book of Revelation is part of the author's greeting to his readers and, also its opening prayer. The reference to Christ "coming with the clouds" echoes the Daniel reading; the allusion to his having "freed us from our sins by his blood" foreshadows today's Gospel passage. The image used to describe Christ is so rich for today's celebration; for Christ is the "faithful witness; firstborn of the dead; ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev.1:5) ... Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus invites conversion by saying he is the Alpha and the Omega - the one who is and who is to come (Rev.1:8). Above all, Jesus invites conversion by his death for us. Jesus always offers hope and mercy.

Our Gospel reading also revealed Jesus as **the king of truth and life, the king of holiness and grace, the king of justice, love and peace** (cf. Jn.18:37 and also Christ the King's preface). There is a tremendous irony at work in Pilate's confused state as he attempts to interrogate Jesus, purportedly seeking **the truth**. But it is Jesus who reveals to Pilate the real truth, that his origin **is divine** and his mission is to **'testify to the truth'** by his life – giving death. This is first time Jesus openly declares himself as king when he stands before Pilate. Humiliated and powerless, he confirms that he is king - not a king of political power but of truth. Political power involves coercion; truth involves conversion. Although the words sound similar, there's a big difference. Coercion means forceful submission; conversion means free acceptance - giving one's heart. For example, we pay our income taxes, because we love our country, but also, if we fail, the consequences could be bad. That's coercion - and it's a necessary part of civil government. On the other hand, we have become Christians because of our commitment to follow Christ. That's conversion and free will.

Finally, dear friends, Christ, our King, loves us; he died for us and shares with us whatever he possesses. Let us do our best to love one another and to prepare ourselves to be worthy of the Kingdom of God. Let us remind ourselves that the Kingdom of God cannot exist alongside with the reign of sin. Therefore, let us pray unceasingly for right disposition, by living a life of truth and holiness; a life of justice, love and peace. Let us pray for grace to overcome the devil's temptations and to free ourselves from the dominion of darkness into the splendor of Christ Kingdom. Amen!