

# Homily for the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 25-26, 2017

Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28; Matthew 25: 31-36

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Recent events have me thinking a lot about leadership. Who are our leaders? And I don't just mean world or national leaders, but all leaders—local officials, neighborhood leaders, the presidents of universities and businesses, religious leaders.

A leader is defined as a person who commands a group, organization or country. A King is defined as a man who holds by life tenure, the chief authority over a country and people. A King is central, both geographically and spiritually to his people. Kings are the lawmakers. Good kings protect their realms and their people. They provide order, create and inspire creativity and bless the lives of others. And outside of a monarchy, we can say much of the same about other "good" leaders.

When I stop to think about it, aren't we all leaders in our own way? We are leaders of how we conduct ourselves; we create order in our lives; we create an inner rule of law and order that keeps us from acting in a manner unbecoming a king and we bless the lives of those around us. The secret to being a great leader is to know that we are king only because, by virtue of our baptism, we share Kingship with *The King*, Christ the King, King of the Universe.

It is very fitting this weekend to celebrate Christ the King as this Ordinary Time comes to a close. This feast gives us a preview of the coming fulfillment of the reign of Christ just in time for our transition into Advent, the season that calls us to prepare for the coming King. Of course, Christ's kingship is already present in the church, so we recognize his kingship alive, through Scripture and the Work of Christ in the world, here and now, while at the same time, we prepare for the fulfillment for all things at the end times.

How interesting that on this Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we read the Prophet Ezekiel's image of the Lord as good shepherd, who "will look after and tend" his sheep. "I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark." Just as a shepherd protects his sheep, the Lord God protects his people. Ezekiel reminds us that the Lord will destroy that attitude of "I am sleek and strong" and shepherd us rightly, so that we know once again that the Lord is our Shepherd.

Matthew's Gospel account makes clear for us how Christ will measure us as "sheep" and "goats," and separate us as such.

In sharing in the Kingship of Christ...

Have we fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty? Not only, with actual food and drink, but have we shared the Word of God? Have we brought others to Mass, so that they receive the real food and real drink of Christ, so that they may never go hungry or thirsty again?

Have we welcomed the stranger? Have we shared a warm smile, a helping hand, and an encouraging word with those who think differently than us?

Have we clothed the naked? Not only by sharing warm clothes with those who have none; but by clothing our infants in Christ, through baptism and raising them to be children of God?

Have we cared for those who are ill? Have we been there for loved ones or strangers when they are physically ill? More important, have we been there to bring those who are ill of body, mind or spirit to Christ?

Have we visited the imprisoned? Even if we cannot visit those in prison, have we sat with, loved, encouraged, listened to those who are imprisoned by an unsatisfying or unhappy situation or circumstance?

Each one of us is anointed in Christ at baptism. Like Jesus, we have to be the humble servant in our world. We have a profound and beautiful example of this in Pope Francis, who is always about reaching out to the poor and bringing justice to our world.

One reflection I read about this Solemnity, by Anthony Chezzi, said that we live in a "humpty-dumpty world," a broken world. He reminds his readers that there is

only one King who can bring fulfillment, and that is Christ the King, raised from the dead.

This week I encourage you, to ponder how your life is a reflection of your shared kingship with our Gentle Shepherd, Christ the King, King of the Universe.