

# The Feast of Christ the King – November 24, 2019

The Feast of Christ the King officially closes out the Liturgical year. The 1st Sunday of Advent, next weekend, begins the new Liturgical year. This is a relatively new Feast in the Church having been established by Pope Pius XI in 1925. In 1970, it was permanently set for the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year.

The Readings for this weekend provide us some very interesting thoughts about this Feast and the meaning of this Kingship. When the people of Israel returned from exile to the Promised Land, they were led by Judges for a period of some 300 years. However, the people were not satisfied with this arrangement. The leaders approach Samuel in his old age, and insisted saying : “Now that you are old, and your sons do not follow your example, appoint a king over us, as other nations have.”

Samuel was not pleased, but goes to God in prayer, to present the request! God says, “Grant the people’s every request.” And so, a Monarchy is established in Israel. After the death of the 1st king .... Saul.. the kingdom is divided in 2. The southern kingdom Judah, where David reigns, and the Northern kingdom Israel, where the son of Saul reigns. The leaders in the northern kingdom are not satisfied, and they approach David at Hebron which we see in today’s Reading : “Here we are, your bone, and your flesh” Be our king ! “King David made an agreement with them before the Lord, and they anointed him king of Israel.”

So begins one of the greatest periods in the history of Israel, and the promise that the Messiah will come from this line of Judah. However, the understanding of Messiah was not grasped by the people. The concept of Messiah among the Jews was that of **A Powerful Military Leader** who would conquer all of their enemies. It was born of an ideology that ‘violence is only defeated with more violence.’ Sadly, that concept has remained in place throughout our history. The Messiah has come, lived among us, and taught us a new way of living in relationship with Him, and with each other. But, it still has not brought about the great change He sought to bring about. That work still continues today. **Why does it appear to not be working very well ?** It certainly has a whole lot to do with Free-Will, which we spoke of last week, and the freedom He has given us to live like Him, and with Him, and in relationship with one another.

Nowhere is this more dramatically presented than in the Passion Narrative, and very specifically in the Gospel today .... The Crucifixion ! Here is the Innocent One, crucified as a common criminal in our world. The drama reaches its height !

**This is the culmination of the Gospel ! This was supposed to be the end of Hatred and Violence !**

In St. John’s Gospel account, we read :

“ After that, Jesus, realizing that everything was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, ‘I am Thirsty.’ There was a jar there, full of common wine. They stuck a

sponge soaked in this wine on some hyssop and raised it to His lips. When Jesus took the wine, He said, 'Now it is finished.' Then He bowed His head and delivered over His spirit."

How very Powerful ! What does Jesus mean by, "I am Thirsty" — what does He mean by "It is finished" ?

**Is it not** a declaration that the work I have come to accomplish is finished ..... I have come to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom, to teach, to instruct, to show us how to live in relationship with God and with one another. That work continues today, and will through the end of time. "I Thirst" is not a request for liquid, but rather a thirst for the response of 'My people' to all I have taught and witnessed.

The scene is not unlike many scenes today ..... "The rulers sneered ..... even the soldiers jeered .... the crowds joined in the mantra, "He saved others, let Him save himself!" A criminal on either side embodies two distinct dispositions of the world ..... one says : "Save yourself and us" the other says : "Jesus remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

This very dramatic scene sets the whole of the Gospel in perspective !!

Now, we can take a step back and look at the Gospel, as a whole .... a complete unit ! The passages that may have appeared to be so difficult to understand and appreciate along the way are now brought into full view :

**"Love Your Enemies"**

**"Do Good to those who Persecute you"**

**"Give as it has been given to you"**

**"Don't Grumble about your wages"** (there is only one wage ....coming into the Kingdom)

Remember 21 weeks ago, I invited you to join in and follow the journey of Jesus as He made His way to Jerusalem. All of those great teachings, some that were hard to accept at the time ..... now they come into full view :

**"Follow Me"**

**"Do not be too attached to possessions or things"**

**"The Good Samaritan"**

**"Martha and Mary"**

**"The Our Father"**

**"Guard against all Greed"**

**"The Real treasure is not here, it is in the Kingdom"**

**"There will be many divisions because of Me (faith in me)"**

**"Who and how many will be saved ?"**

**"Invite those who are poor to be a part of your life"**

**"Take good inventory before, beginning a project"**

**“The quest for “the lost sheep”**  
**“The dishonest Steward”**  
**“The Rich Man and Lazarus”**  
**“The plea of the Apostles .... ‘Increase our Faith’ ”**  
**“The Ten Lepers”**  
**“Pray without becoming weary” ( The unjust judge)**  
**“The Pharisee and the Publican” (Tax-Collector)**  
**“The story of Zacchaeus”**  
**“The question of belief or unbelief in the Resurrection”**  
**“The Destruction of the Temple ... ‘His Body’ ”**

You may notice a direct connection in all of these teachings with the wonderful study that we have just completed in our Small Groups, *Walking the Disciples Path*, by Linda Rooney .... and the immense value of following each of her 8 Steps.

The action of today’s Gospel in Jerusalem, is the completion of His teaching, His instruction, His witness. He has given us an example of how to live .....

Somewhere .....Sometime .....the Violence has got to be absorbed, not perpetrated ! A few have done it bravely and courageously throughout our history ! Each one of them being an image of Him.....The Messiah.....Christ our King....The King of Peace!

—Fr. Gerry Hurley