

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe Christ the King

What a great feast to celebrate the closing of our Liturgical Year. The Feast instituted by Pope Pius XI, was begun in 1925 following the Great War ... The First World War. It was brought about to establish that He, and He alone, is The King of The Universe. In 1970, the Feast was reset to be celebrated on the final Sunday of Ordinary Time. Prior to this, it was generally celebrated on the last Sunday of October.

It's a nice thought to celebrate His Kingship/Lordship over us on the final Sunday of the year. And it brings with it the Big Questions :

- 1) How has Jesus manifested Himself as Lord over my life during the course of this past year ?
- 2) What growth have I experienced in my relationship with Him during this past year ?
- 3) What opportunities have I chosen or availed of in order to grow my relationship with my Creator during this past year ?
- 4) What book(s) have I read or studied during the course of this past year in order to extend my relationship with my God and His relationship with me ?
- 5) What courses of study, community gathering, faith sharing, have I chosen to participate in during the past year in order to extend my awareness of His love and care for me ?
- 6) Finally, what time have I consciously given to growing my personal relationship with God ?

There are 168 hours in a week ! There are 8,760 hours in a year ! How many hours have I devoted to understanding and growing my relationship with God ? Am I satisfied with that ? “Probably not” would be the overwhelming answer in most peoples lives ! However, a much greater question is very honestly: What do I plan to do about that?

As Catholics, one of our fundamental forms of worship is certainly the Eucharist, and Eucharistic Adoration !

Not to make you feel guilty, though it could do that, let me ask :

How many of you chose to attend an extra Mass(es) during the course of the past year ? I mean, beyond what we are ‘required’ to do ? How many of you choose to spend an hour in Adoration of The Blessed Sacrament ?

Now I want you to be clear about this :

I am not blaming you ! I am merely asking the question !

My personal belief, and sense, is that we have not taught you to do that we became blind to the reality, I think, because we became overly engaged in the obligation aspects of what people should and should not do !

Subsequently, we can have some pretty strong ideas of what that person Should do, or the other person Should do, but we have a very limited perspective on what I might do in order to grow my personal Relationship with Jesus Christ.

I would like to advocate very honestly, that you seriously consider choosing an extra Mass, maybe once a week, even once a month. It has the capacity to exponentially change our experience of God.

Additionally, I would like to advocate for your choosing a time period in Eucharistic Adoration. We are blessed to have the occasion to offer Eucharistic Adoration each day Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. We had a pretty full schedule for quite sometime, but now we have fallen to a mere remnant of that.

As we begin the New Liturgical Year this coming weekend with the first Sunday of Advent, I encourage you to seriously consider an opportunity for participating in our Eucharistic Adoration. Each member of our Staff takes an hour during the course of the week because we believe it is essential to the work that we are doing.

During the course of this coming year, I would like to place a Premium on extending the practice of Eucharist Adoration in our Parish, and attempt to fill all of the vacancies we currently have in our schedule. I am of the belief that the culture of our parish will change and grow profoundly through the power and grace that is Eucharistic Adoration. I have seen and heard of those changes in other parishes ! Why not here ?

Now to the Gospel for the final Sunday of the year, we read from the Gospel of St. John. Many might observe — Wow this is a strange Gospel to choose for the Kingship of Jesus Christ Why choose the judgement scene ? Why not choose the passage of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, or some other passage of His miraculous healing or Forgiveness ? They are great questions ! Thanks for asking them !

Here is the answer. There is no better passage than this, to be perfectly honest, because this is the core of the Gospel. The story of the Gospel is fundamentally a 'story of the Reversal of

fortunes'the last will be first and the first will be last that is genuinely pretty scary. What we all thought was right and true, often based on nothing but hearsay, is not true at all.

We see all of these ingredients unfold in the Gospel — look carefully ! Jesus 'the vulnerable One' before Pilate the Judge. Making no case on His own behalf, but standing firmly on the 'Truth'. The tide of 'popular opinion' has turned clearly against Him. People have gotten in the ear of Pilate, and now Pilate is attempting to establish the truth !

“Are you the King of the Jews ? Are you saying this of your own or have others been telling you about me ?”

What an important question for each of us also — Am I saying He is Christ my King ? Or, is it just what others have been telling me about Him ?

Pilate is rather amazing, “I find no case against Him” he ultimately declares, not once, but twice..... But, as we well know, the 'court of popular opinion' is a very powerful influence. And in Pilate's case, that is a very large looming truth 'If you free this man you are no friend of Caesar' and by association 'no friend of ours' Wow — what a horrible price for friendship! That is really sad. Jesus is steadfast : My Kingdom is a Kingdom of Truth.

“Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice”

We recently had very serious allegations leveled against one of our priests, and I am pretty sure, most of you have heard of them. What a very sad and difficult experience for all of us.

Many jumped to conclusions immediately, based on allegations, alone, nothing more. The resultant questions were naturally — Why didn't the bishop do this? Why didn't the Diocese do that? Who knows what they did or did not do ? Why is it that we are so presumptuous, so addicted to the idea that I have 'all the truth, all the facts' when in fact all I have is allegations?!

Is that not our Gospel story?.....wait on the whole to be revealedTrust the Truth He the 'Vulnerable One' is the TruthHis kingdom is the Kingdom of Truth ! Wow what a difficult and profound Truth.

Let me share with you a story that comes from the Rabbinic Tradition (and I invite you to reflect on it during the course of the week Homework ...Yes !)

A young fugitive comes to a town where the people are willing to take him in and hide him. When soldiers arrive in search of the fugitive, the townspeople protest that they know nothing. Suspecting their lie, the soldiers warn that, unless the fugitive is turned over by morning, the entire town will be destroyed. In deep fear the people rush to their pastor for counsel. The priest, greatly troubled, starts searching the scriptures for an answer. All night long he reads and finds nothing. Then, just before dawn, his eyes fall on a passage, "It is better that one man should die for the people than that the whole people be lost"

He is sure that's the answer, and goes to the people with the news. The soldiers are informed that the fugitive is indeed hidden among them, and the young man is taken away. They throw a big party in the town, lasting far into the night, and celebrate their deliverance by the grace of God.

The Pastor returns to his study, still troubled. An angel appears to him and asks what's his problem. "I still don't feel right about turning over the fugitive" the pastor says. The angel replies, "Did you not know that he was the Messiah" ? The pastor is incredulous. " How was I to know" ? he asks.

"If instead of reading your Bible', the angel answers, "you had taken time to visit the young and looked into his eyes, you would have known he was the Messiah" !

When we separate the scriptures from real life, we distort the scriptures. When we separate the scriptures from 'The One' at the center of the scriptures, we can so easily misrepresent the scriptures, and also ourselves.

—Fr. Gerry Hurley