Homily of Thirty Fourth Sunday, Year C, Christ the King, 2025

2 Samuel 5:1-3; Psalm 122:1-5; Colossians 1:12-20; Luke 23:35-43

The feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925, not long after the end of the First World War. The pope established the feast as a statement of faith against the prevailing ideologies of communism and secularism at that time. The two ideologies attempted to exclude faith, religion, and God from humanity. This feast is even more relevant to us nowadays that we are facing many anti-Christian and anti-Catholic ideologies, and persecution of Christians. By celebrating this feast, we are upholding the teachings of the Scripture, the teachings of the Church, and continue to proclaim Jesus Christ as our leader and king, no matter the direction the world is moving to.

In the first reading, all the tribes of Israel came to David and recognize him as their savior, their shepherd, and their king. Our celebration today is a re-enactment of what took place in the first reading. Jesus Christ is our new King David. We are celebrating him as our Savior, our Shepherd, and our King.

Jesus' disciples and followers misunderstood his kingship. They expected Jesus' kingship to be political. Even on his last day on earth they still asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They forgot that Jesus had said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Although Jesus was not a political king, Christianity has a universal influence and impact on world's civilization, history, discoveries, philosophy, theology, geography, history, literature, science, medicine, and development more than any religion. The birth of Jesus brought about the categorization of world history to "Before Christ" and "After Christ." From a few followers in Judea, Christianity has spread to every part of the world. Christians are one-third of the world's population and Christianity the world's largest religion. This is a fulfillment of Daniel prophecy, "He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14). Also, Zechariah (9:10) prophesies, "His empire shall stretch from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth." We are not surprised, therefore, why Christianity is in the remotest corners of the world.

In the second reading, St. Paul explains Jesus' kingship, "… For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. … that in all things he himself might be preeminent (*all surpassing*) … whether those on earth or those in heaven." In this reading, St. Paul calls us members of Christ's kingdom. St. Peter calls us, "kingly people" (1 Peter 2: 9). Since we are members of Christ's

kingdom and kingly people, St. Paul challenges us to die with him, to live with him, to persevere in him, and reign with him (2 Timothy 2:11).

The universe is not remote in a distant land, or in the heavens, or across the sea. The universe is our home, our parish, our church, our neighborhood, our society, our work place, our business place, our market place, our gatherings, and those in need of our help. As his disciples, he has bestowed on us the authority over snakes, scorpions, and all powers of the enemy (Luke 10:19). It is through our discipleship and witnessing Jesus that we reign with him.

Psalm 98:9 says, "The Lord comes to govern the earth, to govern the world with justice and the peoples with fairness." The Lord does not appear as a human being and as a political king to govern the world. Rather, he governs the world with justice and fairness through us who are his followers. It is sad where many Christians in positions of leadership and responsibilities are silent, or are accomplices, or are perpetrators of injustice and all kinds of evil in our society.

Finally, I cannot give to the world what I do not have! For me to proceed to govern the world in the name of Jesus, I have to, first, allow Jesus to govern me, transform me, and empower me. This can only be possible when I do as St. Paul advises, "Let the word of God rule in your heart" (Colossians 3:16), and "… have the same attitude as Jesus had" (Philippians (2:5). It is when the word of God becomes the guiding principle that rules my decisions and actions that I am transformed into the attitude of Jesus. It is then that Jesus, through me, governs the universe selflessly with authority, love, compassion, truth, justice, and fairness.

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