

Christ the King - B
Daniel 7:13-14;
Revelation 1:5-8;
John 18:33b-37
Little Flower - 11/25/12

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. Today also marks the last Sunday of this church year.

As Catholics, we often use the terms *Kingdom of God* and *Kingdom of Christ* interchangeably. However, theologian Father Francis Sullivan argues that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are two distinct realities.

The Kingdom of God will only be realized fully in a new heaven and a new earth when Christ returns in glory as described in today's readings from the Prophet Daniel and the Book of Revelation. Christ's return in glory will mark the end of time as we know it. Jesus made it very clear that the time of his return in glory is known only to his heavenly Father [Mt. 24:36]. Likewise, his coming in glory cannot be hastened or delayed by anything we do. It is completely outside our power to influence his return. At the same time, we believe that Jesus' coming in history planted the seed of the kingdom of God.

On the other hand, in today's Gospel, Jesus responds to Pilate, "*My kingdom does not belong to this world.*" The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom. Today's Preface describes the kingdom of Christ as "an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace." The kingdom of Christ is already present within and among us to the extent that we open our hearts to Christ and to the extent that we live the qualities Christ taught and lived.

The kingdom of Christ may be a spiritual kingdom, but this does not mean that it is an invisible kingdom. It is the mission of Christians and Catholics as individuals and as communities to make the kingdom of Christ present and visible in the world. Jesus reiterated this in many different ways:

"You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world.... your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father"
[Mt. 5:13a, 14a-16].

"The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened" [Mt.13:33].

We are to be salt, light, and yeast in our world.

My brothers and sisters, today we hear so many people lament the state of our society and culture whether it be the materialism, the narcissism, or the secularism of our society and culture. Christians and Catholics are to be the salt, light, and yeast in our society. If we want to change our culture, the first thing we all need to do is to put Christ at the center of our lives and then live our lives out of that center. In 1945, Maryknoll Father James Keller founded The Christophers. He chose an ancient Chinese proverb as their motto: "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Christ is present whenever we make incarnate his kingdom in the world, whenever we live the qualities listed in today's Preface. If we put Christ first in our lives and live these qualities, we give witness to the presence and power of Christ's kingdom in our world even before the coming of God's kingdom.