

Christ the King - C
2 Samuel 5:1-3;
Colossians 1:12-20;
Luke 23:35-43
Little Flower - 11/20/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. In the Preface of the Mass, we pray, "For you anointed your Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the oil of gladness, as eternal Priest and King of all creation." Unfortunately, when we think of kings, we often think of the trappings and the arbitrary power of a king. Neither of these fit Jesus.

The anointing of David as king in today's first reading prefigures or foreshadows the kingship of Christ, a descendant of King David. The people quote the Lord: "*You shall shepherd my people Israel...*" Christ is a shepherd king, not a political or military king. A shepherd king is a leader and a light to his people. In John's Gospel, Jesus tells us that he is the good shepherd. In his own description of the good shepherd, he explains what it means to be a shepherd king:

"I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me...and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd" [10:14-16].

Later in the passage, we are told that David made an agreement with all the elders of Israel and they anointed him king of Israel. This agreement was a treaty. This treaty foreshadows the New Covenant between Christ and the Church that unites us with God and one another in love. At the consecration of the wine at every Eucharist, we pray, "For this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant...."

Paul's Letter to the Colossians praises Christ as the firstborn of creation and the firstborn from the dead, therefore, Lord of creation and Lord of life. As Lord of creation, "*all things were created through him and for him...and in him all things hold together.*" All things were created through Christ; all things were created for Christ; in Christ all things hold together!

The most powerful part of this three-part statement is that "*in him all things hold together.*" If Jesus stopped loving us or the world for even an instant, we and the world would not die. We and the world would simply cease to exist! Therefore, Jesus is truly Lord of heaven and earth. What this means is that we can be sure that Jesus has never stopped loving any one of us, even for an instant, no matter what we may have done, or we would not be here today.

In this passage, St. Paul wrote that God "*transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" According to Paul, dying and rising, Jesus reconciles us with God and with one another. Therefore, we live within the kingdom of Christ to the extent that we are reconciled with God and with others, which requires us to be reconcilers.

Today's Gospel is an interesting choice for the celebration of Christ as King of the Universe. The rulers and the soldiers at his crucifixion as well as one of the thieves mocked him as did the sign above him on the cross. The other thief, however, had an intimate encounter with Jesus. He first acknowledged his own guilt and Jesus' innocence. He then asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus responded, "*Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.*" In this encounter, Jesus revealed himself as Lord of life.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is Lord of creation and Lord of life. He is a shepherd king, a leader and a light to his people. He established a new and everlasting covenant with us by dying on the cross and reconciling us with God and ourselves. Above all, the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of love.