



Bringing Home the Word

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe | November 26, 2017

Honoring Our King

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In 2013, many people were eager to hear about the birth of the newest heir to the British throne, Prince George.

What makes people so interested? Does the whole idea of royalty capture our imagination and give us a fairy tale moment—a chance to live in a simpler time (at least to our childhood selves)?

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. This story is emphatically not a fairy tale, and not like any king we've experienced or read about here on earth.

This King comes as one who was obedient to his Father, even to death on a cross. This King comes, raised from the dead, to destroy death and put all things under his reign.

This King also comes as a shepherd to gather his scattered sheep, bind their wounds, and give them pasture.

And this King gathers the nations before him to judge not by how powerful they were, but how they cared for the least among them.

On the last Sunday of the Church year, before we turn our faces again toward Incarnation and birth, we remind ourselves that we are still on a journey with the King of Kings and that he will come again. It's part of the eucharistic prayer in the Acclamation of Faith at every liturgy: "We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection *until you come again*" (emphasis added).

Let us strive to be even more eager, more joyful, and more prepared for this King to come than we were for Prince George.

Let us begin now to live into the new life he has given us. †

He judges the nations by how they cared for the least among them.

A Word From Pope Francis

Mother Church teaches us to give food and drink to those who are hungry and thirsty, to clothe those who are naked... through the example of so many dads and mamas, who teach their children that what we have extra is for those who lack the basic necessities. It is important to know this. The rule of hospitality has always been sacred in the simplest Christian families: there is always a plate and a bed for the one in need.

—General audience, September 10, 2014



Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17

I myself will search for my sheep and examine them as a shepherd examines his flock.

1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Matthew 25:31–46

[Jesus said,] "...Whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I ready for that final exam?
- What should I do today in order to be ready for the loving return of Jesus?



The King and His Kingdom

By Fr. William H. Shannon

You don't hear much about kings these days. They seldom make the news. Perhaps this is the reason you may find it difficult to get excited when Jesus tells us, "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Yet that kingdom must have meant something exciting to Jesus. He was continually speaking about it. So it's fair to ask: Just what made Jesus so enthusiastic about the kingdom of God?

Perhaps I should begin by asking readers, "What do you think Jesus meant by the kingdom?" I put the question to a friend who is ninety-three years old. "I think Jesus meant that the kingdom is the way God wants the world to be," she said. "The world is partially there (there are lots of good people), but it is not yet fully there." An excellent answer to a difficult question.

"The kingdom of God is the way God wants the world to be."

Jesus himself never offers one simple answer to that question. He gives lots

of hints, but we shouldn't be surprised that he never defines it. Jesus was not a philosopher proclaiming abstract truths. He was a storyteller. He describes the kingdom in stories taken from real-life situations his hearers would understand.

Perhaps you've noticed his parables tell us not what the kingdom *is*, but what it is *like*. It's like the sower who puts seed in the ground and waits for it to grow. It's like a pearl merchant who gives up all his pearls to have one special gem. It's like a lowly mustard seed that grows into a big tree, a fishnet that catches good and bad fish, a banquet for which some show up and others do not.

Making the Kingdom Come

Each story gives us insights into what the kingdom meant to Jesus. It is a multifaceted reality that can never be fully captured in words or any single story. Perhaps the clearest way I can sum up what I think Jesus meant is to repeat the words of my wise friend: "The kingdom is what God wants the world to be."

But God is not content just to let this happen. God challenges us to bring it about. Do you know what God's greatest challenge to us was? It was Jesus. A Christian writer called Jesus the "one-man-kingdom of God."

What this writer meant was that Jesus was the first person totally human—as he was also divine—who fully accepted the kingdom of God. God says to us: Look

to Jesus and in him you will see what the kingdom is. Listen to Jesus. He will tell you what it means to enter the kingdom.

The Church, the Kingdom

Jesus' preaching invites all to accept the kingdom and God's rule. He gathers followers, then sends them out to proclaim the kingdom. After his resurrection he gave this task of proclaiming the kingdom to the Church. So could we say that the Church *is* the kingdom? Not exactly. The Church is the *instrument* of the kingdom, calling people to accept God's loving reign over them. The Church is also the *sign* of the kingdom. People should be able to look to the Church and see in it—to some degree—God's loving family.

When we celebrate the Eucharist we are reminded of the difference between the Church and the kingdom when we ask for Jesus' peace: "Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom, where you live forever and ever." Only in the kingdom, where the fullness of God's reign is achieved, do we find true peace and unity. †

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful that you are my gentle shepherd. Show me how to care for your people with the same love and compassion you show me.

From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 27–
December 2

Mon. Weekday:
Dn 1:1–6, 8–20 / Lk 21:1–4

Tue. Weekday:
Dn 2:31–45 / Lk 21:5–11

Wed. Weekday: Dn 5:1–6, 13–14, 16–17,
23–28 / Lk 21:12–19

Thu. St. Andrew:
Rom 10:9–18 / Mt 4:18–22

Fri. Weekday:
Dn 7:2–14 / Lk 21:29–33

Sat. Weekday:
Dn 7:15–27 / Lk 21:34–36