

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe 'C'  
2 Sm 5:1-3; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43  
November 20, 2022

Today's feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, closes our Church year. Next Sunday, is the First Sunday of Advent and the start of a new Church Year. Today's feast originated in 1925, (Because this feast is celebrated at the end of October, that month came to be known as the month of Christ the King.) just as the age of the dictators was beginning, and Pope Pius XI wanted to remind the Church that, with all the groups seeking loyalty in our life, our ultimate allegiance should be to Jesus the Christ.

Today, ninety-seven years later, all the dictators whose power seemed so huge and permanent back then, dictators who dominated the world scene as the Soviet Union, the Japanese Empire, Fascist Italy, and later, the Third Reich, are all gone and Jesus remains. Ninety-seven years or more from now, the power brokers of our time will be gone and Jesus the Christ will remain.

Ironically, on this Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, the Gospel passage shows Jesus at what seems to be his weakest and loneliest, the moment of his crucifixion on the Cross. Yet at that moment, Jesus is not at his weakest, but at his strongest. He is not at his loneliest, but at his most generous.

Jesus seems to be at his weakest on the cross, but he is really at his strongest, because on the Cross at Calvary, he does what no one else on earth can do. He forgives a man's life of sin and gives him eternal life and entry into the Kingdom of heaven.

(Furthermore,) On the Cross, Jesus is atoning for the sins not of a particular group, but of the world, atoning for the sins of all times and places. (the sins of his time and the sins of our time.) On the Cross Jesus is absorbing, almost like a huge blotter, the sins of the entire human race.

At this moment on Calvary, by himself with no one's help, Jesus is unilaterally restoring the life of grace to human history.

What looks like a moment of weakness is really a moment of enormous, supernatural power as, on Calvary, a cosmic lock springs open, a wall is broken down, and heaven is again: "open for business."

The Cross is not a place of Jesus' weakness, but of his strength.

The Cross looked like a lonely place, but Jesus turned it into a city (metropolis) of grace where billions have gathered and continue to gather each day. More people come to the Cross each day than gather in any football stadium.

The Cross is the hospital where our soul and spirit can be healed.

The Cross is the bridge by which we can go back to the Father.

The Cross is the lighthouse directing our sight beyond the present pains and sorrows to a renewed life in Jesus the Christ.

The Cross is the school where we learn the truth about sin and about God's forgiveness.

The Cross is the power station from which we can always draw strength and light.

The Cross is the sword in spiritual battle and the fortress on whose strength we can rely in any temptation.

The Cross is the place where every human being can come to meet Jesus.

How many people as they approach death find Jesus to be the only person to whom they can turn. Whatever they did in life, as a politician, businessperson, construction worker, athlete, writer, bishop, physician, teacher, or parent, they can turn only to Jesus as the evening of life comes and speak those same words of the dying thief, "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.*"

The Cross is a busy place and always will be.

We need also to consider the Kingdom of Jesus here on earth, not a Kingdom of castles and armies, but a Kingdom of human lives that have been healed, restored, forgiven, and renewed into the image and likeness of God.

The Kingdom of Jesus on earth is not a place on a map that we can locate through a global positioning system from a satellite. It is a condition of the soul. The Kingdom of Jesus on earth does not belong to any particular era; it spans all times and centuries.

On this Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we look to the Cross; what looked like a place of loneliness that continually gives life to the world.

To be at the Cross, to be at the Mass, is to be at the headquarters of the Kingdom of Jesus on earth, the center from which Jesus changes lives and our world, because the sacrificial bread and wine of the Mass, the body and blood of Jesus, contain all the power of his Death and Resurrection.

Jesus is King not only because he reigns from above, but because he reigns from within our life.

In this coming Church year, we can resolve to keep a crucifix in our home so we can reflect on it, meditate on it, and consult it. St. John Vianney called the Cross the “*deepest book we will ever read.*”

The Kingdom of Jesus the Christ is shown in his taking an old wooden cross and making it a place of grace and hope for others and us. He can do the same with our life in this coming year and make it a place of grace for others and us.

- Fr. Stephen Lattner, O.S.B.