

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

November 25, 2018 B

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the Word He wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *Christ our King, you are the Ancient One promised from the beginning. Your earthly coming and Death on the Cross freed us from sin and made of us a royal nation in the service of God. Your Kingdom is an everlasting reign, steadfast and glorious. For you are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. You will come on a throne of glory and power to judge the living and the dead at the end of time. May the power of your kingship over the cosmos deeply touch our hearts today as we probe your Word of life. Amen.*

Response to last week's Word: *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week. Did the Word impact your thinking and/or behavior? Did change occur and how was it?*

Facilitator: On this last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the feast of Christ the King. Instituted by Pope Pius XII in 1952 to combat the growing secularism and atheism of his time, it is one of the so-called “idea feasts” that do not celebrate an event in the life of Jesus but rather some aspect of his identity. In it, we recognize and honor Christ as ruler of all. Today’s Responsorial Psalm: “*The Lord is King, he is robed in majesty,*” captures well the mood of the readings on this Feast of Christ the King. The Gospel emphasizes the exaltation of Jesus as King. But before he was exalted, he was first ‘handed over,’ ‘put on trial,’ and ‘pierced.’ A setting of persecution and oppression forms the backdrop of today’s first and second readings. Both readings record a vision given to one of God’s holy ones. The message received is one of hope and assurance that God’s people will be vindicated.

Let us listen to God’s Word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a Word, you may want to write it down to remember.

Read the assigned Scripture readings, pausing briefly after each one. Consider going over the commentary after each reading if you have not done so prior to your meeting.

FIRST READING: Daniel 7:13-14

The Book of Daniel was written to give hope to persecuted Jews during the rule of a cruel leader. Today’s verses are taken from the *middle* of one of Daniel’s visions. The vision begins with God, the Ancient One, sitting on his throne. It is a time of judgement. It is at this point that today’s reading begins:

“As the visions continued during the night, I saw one like the Son of Man coming,,,,”

In these verses, the author is assuring the persecuted Jews that God will send someone to save them from their persecutors.

When we hear these words on the Feast of Christ the King, we know they are describing Jesus. This passage must have contributed to the people’s expectations that Jesus will be a political leader who will overcome the

Romans. Of course, these hopes are dashed when Jesus was crucified.

However, after the Resurrection, the early church realizes that Jesus has fulfilled the hope expressed in this passage in a way that is completely beyond their most fervent dreams. Jesus establishes a spiritual kingdom. His “*dominion is an everlasting dominion,*” and his “*kingship shall not be destroyed.*”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 93

This psalm celebrates God’s re-enthronement as King of Israel. It sings of God’s domain over all of creation. Christian tradition applies these verses to Christ the King in his role as cosmic ruler.

SECOND READING: Revelation 1:5-8

Christ is identified as the “faithful witness” who testifies to God’s truth to the point of death—one who has made us “a royal nation of priests in the service of

God.” When the Son of Man comes in the clouds, people shall lament him because of the way he was pierced and put to death. The words Alpha (beginning) and Omega (end) refer to the eternal nature of God who initiated history and who will bring it to conclusion.

PROCLAMATION GOSPEL: John 18:33-37

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to write down the Word you hear.

**A participant reads the Gospel again,
then all pause to reflect.**

GOSPEL COMMENTARY: John 18:33-37

Let us now read the Gospel commentary privately.

Today’s Gospel is an excerpt from Jesus’ trial before Pilate. The chosen verses are a dialogue between Jesus and Pilate on the *nature* of Jesus’ kingship. When asked by Pilate if he is a king, Jesus points out that his kingship is not of this world but rather about “testifying and witnessing to the truth.” Jesus’ kingship is one that seeks “allegiance of the heart” from his people. Jesus wants to be “King of our hearts.” Jesus’ kingship does not seek to lord it over people but rather to serve. We know from watching Jesus that the only way to enter his kingdom is through trust in God and a life of service.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Turn to the person next to you and share what verse in the Gospel caught your attention. Why?

**Share the next questions in small groups
of 2 or 3 or with the whole group.**

2. Have you ever been falsely accused? If so, what was that experience like for you? If not, what do you think that experience must be like for others, some of whom end up in jail for 20+ years?

3. What does it mean to you to say that Jesus is the Lord of your life? What are some things we can do to make Jesus the Lord of our lives?

4. This weekend, we conclude another liturgical year. Was there one liturgical celebration or one event in your spiritual life that stood out for you?

5. What is the one thing Jesus is saying to us in this Sunday’s Gospel about how a disciple should speak or act? And what do you need to do or change to be a better disciple?

JOURNALING: *Having listened to the Word of God, let us now take some quiet moments to write down what is coming to us. What are you hearing God say to you? Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. Go wherever the Spirit leads you.*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Consider sharing with one other person how you can act on or respond to the message of this Sunday’s Gospel. Suggestion: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make Jesus the Lord of your life.

SHARE PRAYER RESPONSE TO GOD’S WORD

Share a prayer, however brief, on the Gospel you have just heard, discussed and journaled about. For example: *Lord, please help me to make you the King of my life—OR—Lord, help me to always listen to your voice, especially when I find it inconvenient.* In other words, the prayer at this time should flow from the readings. (Consider standing in a circle and hold hands.)

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Let us now share personal prayers of petition (prayers for self) and intercession (prayers for others).

Pray especially for earthly rulers—that justice, peace, love and truth may be the hallmarks of their “kingdoms.” Thank God for the graces received during the past liturgical year.

CONCLUDE WITH A SONG ©