

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

November 21, 2021 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: (Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.) *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.*

Facilitator reads focus statement: 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 First Reading, the Psalm, and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

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 OF THE GOSPEL:

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.

GOSPEL: John 18:33-37

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. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. In the first reading, Daniel gives us a vision of Jesus standing before God. Someday each of us will have that opportunity. What do you envision for yourself?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. This weekend, we conclude another liturgical year. Was there one liturgical celebration or one event in your spiritual life that stood out for you?
6. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed/act on.

JOURNALING: *Having listened to God's word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are 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. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestion: 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.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Share with the person next to you one way you can act on this week's readings. Suggestions: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make Jesus the Lord of your life.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER OF PETITION, THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we need to pray? Suggestion: 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.

CLOSING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

Morning Prayer

I thank you, Lord,
for the wonder of my being,
for giving me another day to love
and serve you,
And enjoy the awesome beauty
of your creation.
May I often think of you during this day
Inspire everything that I say and do.
May it all begin from you
And with your unfailing help,
be carried through for your glory;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Treasury of Prayers by Father Eamon Tobin.