Christ the King: A Kingdom Without End

Full Homily Transcript | Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Good morning.

Today, the Church celebrates one of the most profound feasts of the entire liturgical year: the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. It is not by accident that the Church places this feast at the very end of the liturgical year. After walking with Christ through Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time, Holy Mother Church now asks us a decisive question: At the end of it all, who truly reigns in our lives?

This feast is the Church's final proclamation before we begin a new liturgical year that history is moving not towards chaos, but towards Christ. Nations rise and fall. Political leaders come and go. Human achievements shine briefly and fade. Empires that once seemed the most powerful now exist only in history books. But the kingship of Jesus Christ endures forever. As the Creed reminds us every Sunday, His kingdom will have no end.

The feast of Christ the King reminds us that Christ is not merely a figure of the past. No, He is the Lord of the present and of the future. He is the one through whom all things were made. He is the head of the Church, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Every moment of history finds its meaning in Christ.

It is no surprise, then, that for centuries human history has been measured with reference to Christ. Indeed, the traditional division of the calendar into BC, that is, Before Christ, and AD, Anno Domini, that is, in the year of the Lord, reflects the conviction that Christ's coming into the world marks a decisive turning point in history. In this way, even the measurement of time bears witness to the truth that Christ stands at the very center of human history.

Today's first reading presents a beautiful image of God's kingship. Unlike earthly rulers who often seek power for themselves, God reigns as a shepherd. He says, "I myself will look after and tend my sheep."

God seeks the lost, brings back the strayed, heals the wounded, and strengthens the weak. This is the kind of King Jesus is. He does not rule from a distance. No, He enters our wounded humanity. He searches for us when we wander. He lifts us up when we fall. His crown is woven with thorns. His kingship is not expressed through domination, but through self-giving love.

The second reading today takes our eyes even further. Christ is the victorious King who has conquered the greatest enemy of humanity, that is, death itself. Saint Paul declares that Christ must reign until every enemy is placed beneath His feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Many people today live in fear: fear of sickness, fear of uncertainty, fear of anxiety, fear of loneliness, fear of aging, fear of failure, and fear of death, the greatest one. Yet the feast of Christ the King reminds us that death does not have the final word, but Christ does. The risen Lord reigns, and because He lives, those who belong to Him shall also live.

Today's Gospel is one of the most solemn passages in all of Scripture. We see Christ seated on His glorious throne, judging all nations. What is remarkable is that the criterion of judgment is not wealth, not social status, not influence or success. The King asks only one question: Did you recognize me in the needs of my brothers and sisters? I was hungry. I was thirsty. I was a stranger. I was naked. I was sick, and I was in prison.

Notice that Jesus does not identify Himself with the powerful, not that He hates them, no, but with the vulnerable. The striking truth in today's Gospel is that Christ has hidden Himself among the poor, the suffering, the lonely, the forgotten, and the marginalized.

In our world today, it is easy to profess Christ with our lips while ignoring Him in our neighbor. Many people can spend hours debating religion online, yet still neglect to show kindness to those around them. People can speak about loving Christ while overlooking their elderly parents, their struggling spouse, their lonely parishioners, the vulnerable, the sick, or the poor. But today's Gospel teaches us that every act of mercy is an encounter with the King Himself.

As we bring this liturgical year to its conclusion, the Church invites us to make a sincere examination of conscience. So we may ask: Has Christ truly reigned in my life this year? Have I allowed the Gospel to shape my decisions? Have I recognized Him in those who suffered around me? If Christ were to come today in glory, would He find me among the sheep at His right hand?

The good news is that our King is also a shepherd, as the Responsorial Psalm today says: "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want." The one who will judge us is the same one who seeks us when we are lost and heals us when we are wounded.

So, brothers and sisters, the feast of Christ the King is not meant to fill us with fear, no, but with hope and commitment. Christ reigns. His kingdom is already among us, and every act of faith, love, forgiveness, and mercy extends His reign in the world.

As we prepare to begin another liturgical year, let us renew our allegiance to our only King, whose kingdom will never end. And may we live each day in such a way that when the King comes in His glory, we may hear those beautiful words in today's Gospel: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.