

## THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING (2017 - A)

Today, we celebrate the great Solemnity of Christ the King. On this day, we proclaim Christ's kingship over us and over the whole world. Today, we declare that Jesus Christ is the ruler of our lives and in fact, the ruler of the entire universe.

That said, why do we have this feast? Where did it come from? In answer, this feast of Christ the King was established back in 1925 by Pope Pius XI. At that time, now almost a century ago, the world had experienced a number of wars and conflicts in quick succession.

There had been a war between Russia and Japan in 1906. Following that, there had been a horrible massacre of the Armenians by the Turks. There had been a war between Greece and Turkey, and there had been the First World War with death and destruction on a scale the world had never seen before. Finally, there was the ongoing Bolshevik Revolution in Russia which began in 1917 when the Communists took over. As they consolidated their power, the Communists tortured, executed, exiled or starved to death millions of people.

In addition, the Communists sought to destroy God. They were atheists, and they considered belief in God to be an obstacle to human progress. Man was supreme and not God. So, they spent a great deal of their time destroying churches, killing priests, bishops, sisters and monks and preventing people from baptizing their children or teaching them about God.

Pope Pius XI observed all of this, and in a letter to the Bishops of the world, he explained why he had decided to establish this feast of Christ the King. In his letter (Quas Primas) the Pope wrote that these evils in the world **“were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law out of their lives.”**

Now remember, he wrote this back in 1925. He further said that **“as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations.”** The Pope went on to say that **“Men must look for the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ.”**

Now, in our own times almost a hundred years later, we see different effects from the wholesale rejection of Jesus Christ. Yes, there are still wars going on in various parts of the world, but now we see something different.

Now we see a kind of turmoil which is more personal. We see people whose lives are disordered and whose spirits are crushed and hurting. We see people who don't know God and who don't know why God made them. As a consequence, these poor people live without love and without peace in their hearts.

On the other hand, we know that there is a God, and we know that God made us in His image and likeness. We know that God loves us, and we also know that He wants us to live with Him in heaven. We know that to get to heaven, we must love both God and neighbor. We must love God above all things, and we must love our neighbor as ourselves.

Finally, we know that if we do those things, we will not only have peace in our hearts, but as our holy Gospel reminds us, when our Lord comes in all His glory to judge the heavens and the earth, Jesus our King will say to us, **“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”**

Today, the world is at war with Christ our King. The world is at war with our Lord and Savior, and so the question for us is this: What can we do about it? How do we handle the daily conflicts we experience between our duties to Jesus Christ our King and the demands placed upon us by those who oppose Him and hate Him?

The answer is we hold our ground. We stay the course.

So if your friends and family and neighbors have quit going to Mass, don't you quit too. Instead, keep going. You need the Eucharist to sustain and support you in your faith. Furthermore, since they aren't praying for themselves, your loved ones need your prayers more than ever.

Or, just because everyone else you know is sleeping around, don't you do it too. Instead, hold your ground for Christ your King. Make up your mind to live purely and chastely as a witness to the world that there is a better way which leads to love and happiness.

Or, just because people are making up gods in their own image doesn't mean you should do so too. We already have the commandments, and we already have the one, true God whom we worship and adore and love. So follow what God says.

Or, just because everyone else is watching TV and movies or Internet programming that's filled with violence and profanity and immorality doesn't mean you have too as well. Don't let these things into your homes and minds. Hold your ground for Christ your King.

Today, if we are going to be faithful to Christ our King, we are going to encounter a lot of conflicts between what our faith teaches us and how the rest of the world lives. Much ground has been lost and much territory has been conquered by the evil one, and that means, none of us can be neutral. We are all in this war, and every single one of us will have to choose a side.

From time to time, we will have hard choices to make. Especially when they involve the behavior and lifestyles of those we love. And yes, this will hurt. It always hurts to tell people we love that we can't go where they are going. It always hurts to be made fun of or ridiculed for doing the right thing. However, as His loyal subjects, we must do what Jesus commands. We must follow Christ our King.

And here realize that this is when the devil tempts us more. He says to us, “Surely God's not going to mind. Surely there is room for compromise. No one else sees a problem. Times have changed. The Church is too old-fashioned and needs to get with the times.”

Yet, the truth is the truth. So it doesn't matter how many people choose to live by the truth and how many people do not. The truth is still the truth, and Jesus came to bear witness to the truth, and Jesus also said that the truth will set you free.

Remember it's lies that enslave, and today, the devil's lies have enslaved many in sin.

That's why it's so important that we hold to the truth, even when it hurts, and we must do so even when those we love are leaving the Sacraments and leaving the Church and leaving God. We may be tempted to follow them, but we cannot because the truth is that we love Jesus more.

Martyrs are those who have died for Christ their King. They did so because they loved Jesus even more than life itself. If we want to get to heaven, then we must follow their example. We too must love God more than life itself.

There is a great conflict today between the forces of Christ and the forces of the antichrist. We for our part cannot remain neutral in this conflict. We cannot remain on the sidelines because this war has engulfed us all. We have to choose.

So choose Jesus Christ. Serve Him. Follow Him even when it's hard. Don't fall for the devil's lies and temptations. Don't give in to the world and live like everyone else. If your faith comes second to your job or your comfort or your loyalties to others, then you won't be able to do the hard things when you need to. So first, love God above all things.

Then be faithful to God, and He will give you the strength to do what is right. Say your prayers each day. Go to Mass each week. Say a daily Rosary. Go to Confession on a regular basis. Read the scriptures and study your faith, and God will support you when hard choices come along.

Finally, trust in God. If He is going to ask you for some great sacrifice, know that He will also support you. God will never leave you on your own to do something He requires of you. Instead, He will be standing by your side to help you. So do not be afraid to do what is right.

Today, we all have a decision to make. We have to decide what side we are on. The side of the world or the side of Christ our King. So, let us decide to follow Christ our King who offers to the righteous eternal life. Amen.