

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, UNIVERSAL KING

This last Sunday of the Church's year, before we begin a new Church year on the First Sunday of Advent, is a feast that celebrates Jesus Christ as Universal King. In our Gospel today, Jesus says to Pontius Pilate that he is indeed a king, but that his kingdom is not of this world. So, what kind of king is Jesus, and where is his kingdom if it is not of this world?

The kingdom of Jesus has as its source the divine life of Jesus, who is the Word through whom all creation, whether spiritual or physical, has come into existence.¹ The kingdom of Jesus is thus the source of everything that is truly good, beautiful, life-giving, loving, just, peaceful, unified, trustworthy and truthful. Indeed, Jesus says to Pilate, "*All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.*" Elsewhere in John's gospel, Jesus declares that he is himself "*the way, the truth and the life.*"² Further, Jesus is a king who leads by example and exercises his kingship in service. He is the servant-king, who desires only to exercise his supreme authority in love.

In the fullness of the coming of the kingdom of Jesus, there will be no more evil, hatred, injustice, factions, lies, suffering or death. These things have only come into existence because fallen angels and human beings have unfathomably chosen to live outside the reign of Jesus. The fullness of the reign of Jesus has not yet come in our world or in our lives, and will not come until the end of time, but we can choose his kingdom now in the way that we live our everyday lives.

The question, then, is not 'if' but 'when' the fullness of Christ's kingdom will come. The Book of Revelation describes how Jesus already reigns supreme, and indeed, our first reading today describes how the Old Testament prophet Daniel had a vision in which '*one like a son of man*', who we can now identify as Jesus Christ, '*came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire be destroyed.*' Because God lives outside of time and can see everything past, present and future before Him, He can reveal to us through his inspired Word, the Scriptures, the ending before we ourselves have seen it come about.

Yet, we find ourselves still questioning whether the Risen Jesus truly reigns from heaven when we still see so much evil and suffering in our world. Does evil and darkness not seem to be on the increase around us? Well, drawing upon the Scriptures, the Church says the following in the Catechism concerning Christ's final coming in glory: '*Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth... The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgement after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.*'³

We should not lose heart, then, when we see many rejecting Jesus and his Church, and the kingdom of evil on the increase. This is already foretold in the scriptures but so is Christ's final victory. One comparison I heard recently was that it is like watching a recording of a football match that took place earlier that day. During the recorded match the opposing team is dominating and is in the lead close to the end. Then your brother, who supports the same team as you do, comes in rejoicing because he has just got home from being at that very match and he witnessed your team winning! So, while on the recording you have only reached the part where the opposition is winning, you

¹ See John 1:3.

² John 14:6.

³ CCC 675, 677.

know then for sure that your team wins the match. Jesus has already won the victory over the powers of evil and He is already the Universal King! We just need to remain faithful to him, even unto death, and see his victory unfold before us.

God bless,

Fr Andy