

Homily  
Christ the King  
Nov. 25/26, 2017  
St. Bernard Church, Tulsa  
Deacon Tim Sullivan

If I asked you to complete the following sentence: "Jesus is my \_\_\_\_\_," how would you fill in the blank?

The purpose of today's feast day, the Feast of Christ the King, is to encourage Catholics around the world to fill in the blank with the word "king," Jesus is my King.

Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925. He did so for the following reasons, and I'm quoting from his encyclical:

"The majority of men have thrust Jesus and his holy law out of their lives; these had no place either in private affairs or in politics; and 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. Men must look for the peace of Christ in the kingdom of Christ...Peace could not be more effectually restored ... than through the restoration of the Empire of Our Lord."

The Pope knew that a prominent theme of Jesus in the Gospels is that the kingdom was at hand, that the kingdom over which he reigned was to a great degree now available on earth. Throughout the Old and New Testament, Jesus was referred to as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who would reign until at the end of the world he had put all his enemies under the feet of God the Father.

The situation in the world today is probably worse now than in 1925. In fact, trying to promote the concept of Jesus as King is a huge marketing challenge. Why?

First of all, we don't have kings any more, with very few exceptions. So most of us don't even think about kings and what it might mean for us if we had a king.

Instead of having kings, we're used to living in a democracy, where we get to express our opinions freely and vote on things. We wouldn't like the idea of even a good king telling us how things are going to be done.

Another problem is science and technology. Many people think that most if not all of our problems can be solved by science and technology, that we don't really need

God anymore. A good smart phone has all the answers we need, as long as we've got adequate coverage.

I just read that an atheist, who is a former Google engineer, is going to build a "robotic god," which he says will be a billion times smarter than any human being. The idea is for other atheists to worship the robotic, godlike computer.

Along with science and technology, we have other false gods such as materialism and consumerism which often explain better than our religious faith what is really important to us.

Okay, so even if it might be a big challenge, what would be the benefits of thinking of Jesus as our King?

Well, let's look at the way Saint Paul describes the life that a Christian can live if we surrender to Jesus and accept Him as our king.

He says in his Letter to the Colossians that we can be "filled with **the knowledge of God's will** through all spiritual wisdom and understanding to live in a manner worthy of the Lord, so as to be fully pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God, **strengthened with every power, in accord with his glorious might**, for all endurance and patience, with joy giving thanks to the Father, who has made you fit **to share in the inheritance of the holy ones** in light."

Let's look more carefully at 3 phrases in this passage.

- 1) "filled with wisdom and understanding giving us a knowledge of God's will" – this means realizing that God is communicating His will to us all the time, in every aspect of our lives; so that we can live out the meaning and purpose that God intended for each of us;
- 2) "strengthened with every power by God's glorious might" – we experience the supernatural power and grace of God in the events of our lives;
- 3) "sharing in the inheritance of the holy ones" – we are linked to other members of the kingdom, all of us working together and being united by one thing: our complete loyalty to Jesus.

No amount of money, no material possessions, no smart phone, no computer, no robotic god, can give us these 3 gifts, these powers.

To accept Jesus as King requires that we detach ourselves from our possessions, our ideas and desires. This is illustrated by Jesus in the story of the rich young man, who was faithful to God in so many ways but was still attached to worldly

things and values. Detachment means that we let Jesus shape our ideas, our desires and our actions.

Detachment requires that we give Jesus a full deck, putting no limits on what He might ask us to do. He can play any card He wants to.

It means waking up in the morning and thinking, "Lord, I have my plan for this day. Yet I am open and flexible for your plan and for what you might ask of me. Help me know your will and have the courage to carry it out, no matter what the cost. I know that if I am following your will, I will have the benefit of your power and your grace in all that I do."

We will never know the true meaning and purpose of our lives unless we can proclaim Jesus as our King and be detached from all those distractions which obscure His plan for each of us. The plan Jesus has for each of us is more exciting, more adventurous, more fulfilling than any plan we would come up with on our own.

I want to close with this prayer:

Lord God  
you crowned Jesus as King of your holy city,  
and gave him your Church to be his Bride.  
As he proclaims the law of your eternal kingdom,  
may we serve him faithfully,  
and so share his royal power forever.