

***Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Twenty-Fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost (Latin Mass)
November 20, 2022
Year of Saint Joseph***

“Any new departure in the discipline or liturgy of the Catholic Church tends to be accepted, almost at once, as a legacy from immemorial antiquity. Probably most people think of this feast, the Feast of the Kingship of Christ, that is if they think of it at all, as something that has always been there, like Trinity Sunday, or even All Saints’ Day. As a matter of fact, it was established in the year of jubilee, 1925.”

(Ronald Knox, Pastoral and Occasional Sermons, p.521)

During the history of Catholicism, various feasts have been inserted into the Church’s liturgical calendar. The reasons for these insertions have been varied. One of particular interest, as it applies to the Feast of the Kingship of Christ, is the feast being used to reawaken in man the importance of some aspect of life. Borrowing an example from the homilies of the English convert and priest, Rev. Ronald Knox, the feast of the Holy Family was commissioned to remind mankind of the importance of family life and counteract the growing negligence which viewed the nature of family as complete even with the subtraction of one of its defining members; father, mother, or children. A few questions arise for our consideration: “Why was the Feast of Christ the King instituted? Did the Pope want the peoples of the world to have a greater appreciation of the role of the Monarchy? Or, was the reason for this feast to remind us of another way, a spiritual way, in which Jesus is a King, our King?”

We begin our reflection by reminding ourselves of the discussion between Pontius Pilate and Our Lord on the morning of His Crucifixion.

Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?” Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?” Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting** so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. **For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**” Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” (John 18:33-38)

Jesus affirms that He is a King, but not a King with His Kingdom established using this world rules. His is a Spiritual Kingdom. It is a Kingdom based upon Truth. And, it is truth, once accepted, which holds sway over the hearts of its subjects. For he who seeks after truth, seeks after God. And, once he finds and accepts truth, then he finds and accepts God.

Truth, therefore, becomes that which marks us as subjects of the Kingdom of Christ. Yet, that is only one part of the Kingdom of the Christ. The second part involves the fight to protect and defend the truth. As Jesus says, His subjects would fight for Him, would fight for Truth for He is Truth. This call to arms does not involve one in a prolonged campaign to conquer a piece of ground, a city, a country. Rather, this is an invitation for the subjects of Christ to join in the battle for the minds and hearts of man. We, if we are to be His subjects, must be willing to fight for this, for truth, for Him. We do this in the arena of ideas and actions. We are called to promote ideas which re-enforce virtuous ideals, Christ-centered ideals. We are called to live heroic lives which affirm our belief in the truths taught by Christ through His Church. Let truth be our battle standard. For only truth, most specifically the truth which is Christ, has the power to move a man's mind and heart leading him to sanctity.