

Christ, King of the Universe (C)
(2 Samuel 5:1-3 / Luke 23:35-43)
24.11.2019

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today the liturgy invites us to celebrate **Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**. It is worthwhile to pay attention to the words used for this Christological title: Christ is not simply called 'King' but 'King of the Universe'. Usually, someone is king – or queen – of a country: Queen of the United Kingdom, Queen of Sweden, King of Belgium... Our Lord Jesus Christ is much more than 'the king of a country'. He is much more than 'the king of all the kingdoms of this world'. He is much more than 'the king of all human beings'. He is King of the Universe! He is King of heaven and earth. He is King of the whole creation.

The Lord's kingship over the universe is well attested throughout the Scriptures. We read in the hymn of the Letter of St Paul to the Colossians: "The Lord Jesus is the image of the unseen God and the first born of all creation, for in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible. All things were created through Him and for Him". If everything were created through Christ and for Christ, everything belongs to Him and must be respected. We must respect not only all human beings but also the whole creation of which we are caretakers.

The fact that we are caretakers is clearly stated at the beginning of the book of Genesis, in the second narrative of the creation of the world: "God took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it... Then God brought to the man all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it". We are really caretakers of the whole creation. This is a scriptural justification – if needed – of the Encyclical of Pope Francis: *Laudato si* exhorting us to respect and care for planet earth and the whole creation.

We are called to use creation and not to abuse it. I mean: we have to treat all creation in a respectful way, according to the will of the Creator, without destroying it for our own selfish interest.

Ecology, climate change and global warming for example are not interesting but optional topics; they are essential concerns for those who follow Christ, King of the Universe and want to do his will. We all have to work together to care for and protect our common home.

As we confess Jesus as our King, we should respect, love and serve all human beings without exception, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. But it happens that we take advantage of them, use and even abuse them, treating them as objects. This is a sinful behaviour.

The Christ we follow is not only King, but King of the Universe. For this very reason, we should respect the whole creation, beginning with the natural environment in which we live. But it happens that we treat creation as an object to satisfy our own immediate needs, with no care or concern for the environment itself. The whole universe is the common abode that we share with

all our brothers and sisters in humanity; so we have to love, protect, respect and care for it, not abuse and destroy it.

It becomes clear that this celebration of Christ, King of the Universe invites us to conversion. Conversion is a call to turn away from sin, including the sin of destroying the natural environment in which we live and which was given to us by God who created it. Religious conversion is about falling in love not only with God but also with God's creation, and consequently we must love it and care for it. Religious conversion is about confessing our errors, sins, faults and failures: our lack of love for God, our brothers and sisters in humanity, creation and ourselves, and about entering into repentance.

We have to be careful to look at creation as the work of God confided to the care of humankind and not to place centre stage human beings who look at everything in the creation – that does not serve human needs – as irrelevant. To quote Pope Francis, “This is a misguided anthropocentrism that leads to a misguided life style”. There is a question of priority, and we have to get our priorities right. We have to be careful not to place humankind above creation.

We cannot just say that we believe in Christ, King of the Universe; we have also to live this proclamation of faith in our daily lives.

We are called to respect the environment where we live, including all its animals and plants. All have a specific and indispensable function in the universe where we live, and so they must be protected and cared for.

We have to listen to and support those who promote awareness of climate change and the warming of the planet. Are we concerned about the pollution of the air we breathe? Just a simple example: When we have the choice, do we choose to use public transport instead of private transport? Our choice has consequences for the sustainability of the universe.

In our culture, we buy too much, eat too much, waste too much, when in other parts of the globe people have very little, sometimes nothing to buy or to eat. We should meditate on these famous words of Mahatma Gandhi inviting us “to live simply so that others can simply live”.

Again and again we pray: “Lord, may your kingdom come!” There is no doubt that God will play his part. But we also have to play our part. The kingdom of God will not come if we don't play our part. Let us do what we can to protect and care for planet earth where we live and we will become worthy citizens of the universe of which Christ is the king.