

Christ King of the Universe (C)  
(2 Sam 5:1-3 / Luke 23:35-43)  
20.11.22

Dear brothers and sisters,

On this last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church invites us to celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ as King of the Universe. “King of the Universe”: not only king of a nation like the United Kingdom for example, or king of all the nations on earth, but king of the universe, king of heaven and earth; not only king today, but king yesterday, today and for ever, king from the beginning to the end of time.

The intention of today’s readings is to emphasize the radical difference between the kingship of Christ Jesus and that of the lords of this world who often desire power, honour, or wealth.

In order to understand the specificity of Jesus’ kingship, let us listen attentively to the two readings heard this morning.

The first reading from the second book of Samuel has reminded us that David was chosen as king of Israel by God. In the Scriptures, David is regarded as a figure of Christ as King and Messiah. So, it is particularly relevant for us to look at David when we try to understand the kingship of Christ Jesus.

In the first book of Samuel, we read that David was freely chosen by God, a choice that was, so to speak, unexpected. I can’t resist summing up the narrative of this divine choice for you: God, who had rejected Saul, told the prophet Samuel to go to the house of Jesse of Bethlehem, for he had chosen his king from among his sons. Samuel obeyed the Lord’s command. Arriving in Bethlehem, he called Jesse and his sons together. On seeing Eliab, of handsome appearance, he thought that this must be the chosen one of God. But God said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him”. Then Jesse presented six other sons to Samuel, but the Lord had chosen none of them. The prophet was perplexed. But Jesse told him that he had another son, the youngest, who was away from home tending the flocks. Samuel had him brought to him. When he appeared, the Lord said to Samuel: “Get up and anoint him: he is the one!” The story ends with this note: “From that day on, the spirit of the Lord seized on David”. After that, the people of Israel recognized and accepted God’s choice: “the elders of Israel anointed David, king of Israel”.

It is clear that God chose David as king of Israel; the people accepted God’s choice, welcomed David as their king who was then anointed by the elders of Israel. What we see here is that God has the call, he takes the initiative; God chooses, God gives the authority to select David.

The same thing happened for the kingship of Jesus. Jesus did not declare that he was the King of Israel. His kingship was conferred to Him by his heavenly Father. All the Scriptures witness to that. Let us think of the narratives of the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Jesus: “This is my son; listen to him”. Jesus was sent by his Father to proclaim the kingdom of God. Christ Jesus

was from the beginning. Nothing was created but through Him. He will come back at the end of time to recapitulate everything in Himself and to present all things to the Father.

There is an important lesson for us not only in the Church, but also in politics and in every sphere of life. In the Church, authority, leadership or ministry are given by God and confirmed by the Church. In society at large, authority or leadership are given and not taken. I don't confer to myself authority over others. Others give me authority over them. If someone has an ego the size of the cosmos and imposes himself as leader upon others, He is wrong. Very soon, the result will be a fruitless leadership. None of us give authority to ourself. We all receive it from others. This is the message of our first reading.

If we listen now to the gospel, we discover that the precious throne of Christ the King is the Cross. Christ reigns on the Cross. The fullness of the kingdom of God is revealed on the cross. We believe that it is by dying on the Cross that Jesus saved and redeemed us. Have we to conclude that injustice, violence, suffering and death save and redeem? No! Love saves and redeems, not suffering. When we contemplate Christ the King on the Cross, we have to discover that Jesus went through injustice, violence, suffering and death out of love for us, and that it is his love which saved us from sin and death, his love which redeemed us. In other words, on the Cross, Jesus did not allow anger, hate, or revenge to take possession of him. On the contrary he remained loving right up until the end. What strength! What kingship!

Here too the message is clear for us: we are invited to make our way through every movement of envy, anger, hate or revenge that arises in our hearts, allowing love to transform them. When there is hatred in our heart, we have to ask the Lord for the grace to put love there instead; when there is anger, graciousness; when there is envy, blessing; when there is bitterness, warmth; when there is pettiness, compassion; when there is chaos, peace; when there is sin, forgiveness. This is what Christ the King did on the Cross. This is what we are invited to do. This is not easy. But this is the way to life, the divine way to life..., the way to the divine life in which we are called to share.

In the short gospel passage we heard this morning, three times an invitation was made to Jesus on the Cross to save himself. First the leaders said: "Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God". Then the soldiers said to Him: "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself". Finally one of the criminals crucified with him: "Save yourself and us as well". Jesus could not save himself. His heavenly Father alone could save Him and he did this at the Resurrection.

What is true of Jesus the King, is also true for us: we cannot save ourselves, even by our good works. We have to be saved by someone else, by Jesus. Salvation is a gift to ask for in prayer and to receive with gratitude.

Christ Jesus, King of the Universe, may your kingdom come within our hearts! May we consent to welcome the personal call in life that you address to each one of us! May we make our way through all the events of our lives with love! Lord, may we never forget that you are the Saviour, our only Saviour!