

## **Christ the King 2**

### **Introduction**

Today is the feast of Christ the King. What do we know about Jesus?  
Awhile ago a reflection on Christ became very popular.

#### *ONE SOLITARY LIFE...*

*He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty.*

*Then he became an itinerate preacher.*

*He never held an office.*

*He never had a family or owned a house.*

*He didn't go to college.*

*He had no credentials but Himself.*

*He was only 33 when public opinion turned against him.*

*His friends ran away.*

*He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial.*

*He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.*

*While he was dying his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth.*

*He was laid in a borrowed grave.*

*20 centuries have come and gone,*

*and today he is a central figure of the human race.*

*All the armies that marched,*

*all the navies that ever sailed,*

*all the parliaments that ever sat,*

*and all the kings that ever reigned*

*have not affected the life of humankind on this earth*

*as much as the One Solitary Life.*

Of course, for so many of the people of the world today Jesus is not that important.

For others he is a prophet or a wise man whose teachings were exemplary.

What about us who are disciples of Jesus?

Is Jesus important to us?

Why?

Which of his teachings do you admire?

What about Jesus do you admire?

Why are you here today?

### **I Christ the King**

What can we say about this feast of Christ the King?

We know that kingship is about power and authority and influence.

And we know what power and authority are about...  
being in charge,  
ruling,  
having things done the way we want them done,  
having influence....  
having it our way.

Think of it... what it would be like having all of that power –  
if we were '*king for a day.*'  
Cancel our debts.  
Take care of our family and friends.  
New car and new home...  
sort of like dreaming what would we do if we hit *Powerball*.

But Jesus' power is not like that.  
His authority is not like that.  
I would bet that if Jesus won the *Powerball* he would not behave like our  
world would expect a *Powerball* winner to behave.

When our King walked among us  
He took *special* care of the poor, the sick, the disenfranchised, the suffering,  
the marginalized, the needy.  
He didn't **solve** these problems in his society...  
but he did show a special love and care for the people who were hurting...  
the sick,  
the needy,  
the lepers,  
the prostitutes,  
those with other handicaps...  
those who are nonpersons in our world today.

Remember the stories of Jesus healing the lepers and forgiving the  
prostitutes...  
Remember the stories Jesus told: the father taking back the prodigal son,  
the shepherd searching for the lost sheep.  
Pope Francis reminds us that God's mercy abounds in the life and teachings  
of Jesus.

Jesus used his authority and power to help care for all and especially the  
poor and lost. Jesus instructed his followers to do the same...  
feed the hungry,  
clothe the naked,  
visit the shut-in...

If Jesus is king, his kingship would be an awfully strange one in the eyes of the world. Jesus would seem to be king of the wounded and the outcast. And that's not how our society would exercise kingship if one were to be **"King for a Day."**

## **II The Kingdom of God**

In his own time it seems that Jesus did not proclaim himself a king – he knew how this would be misunderstood.

He did proclaim that he had come to usher in the **Kingdom of God**... What is this **Kingdom of God**?

This is wherever God's care and compassion and healing comes about.

This is where people experience the mercy of God.

Sometimes we are so warped by the standards of our world that we fail to see the beauty of God's Kingdom in our midst.

Every year over 400 first year students from Duquesne Univ, organized by Student Affairs at Duquesne, help to clean up trash from the South Side... to help keep our neighborhoods and our city clean and beautiful instead of ugly.

Our South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association works tirelessly to make our Slopes neighborhood clean, safe and green, and working together as good neighbors.

I think of a wonderful woman who recently passed after suffering for two years with Lou Gehrig's disease. After her death, stories were told about her... one woman described how she brought a pot of homemade soup to her home when her husband was recovering from an operation. These are examples of God's Kingdom breaking into our history.

Life is not about 'taking care of just our own'...

Or maybe better to say...

realize that "your own" are neighbors and fellow Pittsburghers.

Jesus never referred to himself as a king.

He did refer to himself as the Good Shepherd, who would lay down his life for his sheep.

In the early Church the earliest depiction of Jesus was as the Good Shepherd, not as the triumphant king. The feast of Christ the King came only later into the Church's understanding of Jesus her Lord.

And so on this feast day of Christ the King, we recognize that Jesus' kingship is one of compassion and caring, healing and doing his best to help people to flourish... and that's what God's Kingdom is about...

And those of us who follow Jesus should understand this.  
So many of our saints brought God's Kingdom into our world.  
Just think of Mother Theresa of Calcutta.  
Like Mother Theresa we are challenged to bring God's Kingdom into our world –  
*Thy Kingdom come, we pray,  
On earth as it is in heaven.*

We who celebrate the feast of Christ the King realize that he rules as the Good Shepherd who gave up his life for his sheep.  
And we are invited and challenged to be other Christ's in our world.  
We are not just concerned about just being entertained consumers, and having it our way.  
We are not the center of the universe.

We *are* concerned about caring for others,  
about our neighbors and fellow citizens,  
and especially the unimportant ones,  
refugees and frail elderly,  
the marginalized and needy,  
the shut-in and the sick.

If there is anyone like that you haven't called in a while,  
or you haven't visited...  
call them when you get home,  
visit them in the near future...  
celebrate the feast of Christ the King as he would want you to.

## **Conclusion**

As we continue with this Eucharist we remember our Good Shepherd and King laying down his life for us, to dispel the darkness and sin and ugliness of our world and assure us of God's merciful love and presence in our world.

At Communion may we invite our Shepherd and King into our hearts to heal us, to change us, to transform us into true disciples of Jesus – people who bring God's Kingdom into our world.