

## **Christ the King... A**

### **Introduction**

Today is the Feast of Christ the King.

We are at the end of our Church worship year.

Next Sunday is Advent, the beginning of our new Church year.

What might the Feast of Christ the King mean to us today,  
in a culture with few kings and few kingdoms.

### **I A King in our World**

When I think of kings and kingdoms, I think of political power, nation states,  
or politics in general – I think of power...

and power is usually looked at in terms of political power.

Power in this sense is the ability to get others to do your will,  
to follow your policies,

to accomplish the goals of your vested interest.

And that's not always bad –

it's the way of the world... sometimes good, sometimes not so good.

This power can be put to good use to help others,  
or to ruin others.

We have no experience of a King.

From movies we might picture a king as a mighty ruler... powerful, strong,  
rich – hopefully a good king... usually a warrior King.

In our day we would expect a modern King to wear a fine Armani suit, spend  
time with the wealthy and influential... be handsome and act royally...

Appearances are so important!

### **II Jesus the King**

Today's feast calls Jesus a King.

What kind of power does Jesus wield?

If we look at today's Scripture readings we get a good sense of the kind of  
power that Jesus wields.

The first reading from Ezekiel, Chapter 34, describes a good shepherd  
using his power to guide and heal his sheep.

The second reading from 1 Cor tells us that Christ is the new Adam,  
showing us God's dream for a redeemed humanity.

The Gospel reading from Mt 25 tells us when Jesus returns he will ask  
us, "How did we use our power?"

In the Gospel Jesus tells us to walk in his kingly footsteps...

to serve as he served...

*To feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit the sick... to care for the least of his brothers and sisters.*

Jesus came to serve and to show us God's dream for humanity –  
to live as brothers and sisters of God's human family.

Interestingly enuf, isn't that the goal of the AA Program... Step 12?

What kind of a King was Jesus?

He dressed like others,

cared for the people he encountered,

healed many of them,

preached,

and ultimately he was put to death because of how he lived and what he preached...

his throne a Cross,

his "kingly" acts... forgiveness and compassion...

The King's mother suffered terribly at His end...

and he had to bear that too.

We have a King who knows what it is to suffer,

has walked an earthly journey

and is a Man of Compassion and Forgiveness.

Do we look up to Jesus?

Do we admire Jesus?

Do we even think about Jesus?

Do we keep our eyes on Jesus?

### **III Heroes Today**

In our world people fix their gaze on "important" people...

movie actors and actresses,

sports stars,

But what have they accomplished?...

fame and paparazzi –

loss of privacy,

too many multiple marriages, if they get married,

and the never ending anxiety and fear-motivated stress of staying on top...

or maybe the 15 minutes of fame for being a Survivor –

or being kicked off of Survivor.

For us followers of Jesus,

Jesus is our hero.

Listen to this reflection entitled

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 to rest 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.*

#### **IV What About Us?**

Where's that leave us?

Remember once again today's Gospel.

We know what Christ the King did with his power.

What do we do with our power?

I talked to a family whose father passed away recently.

I asked them what they remembered about their father.

Their first response was to say that although their father had been wounded in World War II and had total disability,

he never worried about himself,

he never became self-absorbed.

Rather, he always gave a helping hand.

He was a handyman, and if anyone needed anything fixed,

he was there... dependable, caring, kind.

What a wonderful memory that family had of their father... what a powerful memory.

And that memory was an example and a challenge to the family, to live lives like their father.

To use the power of our talents and interests to reach out to give a helping hand... that's how to use our power.

That's also what the Program teaches us.

It's not must about sobriety and serenity... it's especially about service.

There's a story I like that I used before but that bears repeating here when talking about power...

**Story... The Wise Man and the Bandit**

*Once upon a time there was a very wise man who was on his way to a village on the other side of the mountain to teach, to beg, and to call more disciples to follow his way. He intended to take a shortcut over the mountain pass to save time. But immediately the people and his friends said, "No, don't go that way. The pass is filled with bandits lying in wait for you and if they find you don't have money or jewels they will kill you brutally.*

*The wise man couldn't be bothered with such warnings, and he continued on his way. Well, no sooner had he climbed high into the pass when a notorious bandit appeared, bearing down on him with sword in hand and shouting, "Your money or your life!"*

*The wise man looked up at the bandit astride his horse, pulled out his empty pockets and said, "I guess it's my life, since I have no money."*

*As the bandit moved toward him, sword in motion, the wise man stopped him in his tracks: "You know the rules. If you take my life, then you must at least grant me a last wish!"*

*The bandit stopped. "Alright. What do you want? Make it quick old man."*

*The wise man said, "My wish is simple and has two parts. First, see that great tree over there and the limb that extends far out over the path? Cut it off!" The bandit grinned and in seconds the limb lay on the ground. "Alright old man, what is the second part?"*

*The wise man turned toward him and said very quietly and steadily, "Now put it back on again."*

*The bandit was speechless and then started laughing uproariously. "You are the stupidest man I've ever met! No one can put a limb back on a tree after it's been cut off! Insane! You're idiotic."*

*The wise man looked at him and said, "I am not the one who is stupid. You are. Anyone can destroy. Any child without knowledge can cut things up. Anyone can main, kill, mutilate and undo reality. It takes no power or intelligence whatsoever."*

*The bandit was caught off guard. The wise man continued, "What takes power, real power, is to be able to heal, to bring life, to restore, to stand in the breach, to undo the evil and the destruction that you've done in the past. That takes real power, imagination, and creativity. What you've done takes nothing at all. Anyone can do what you've done. They eyed each other for a long time. Then the bandit got off of his horse, laid down his sword at the wise man's feet, knelt in respect before him, and humbly asked, "Teach me that kind of power."*

**Conclusion,**

Jesus, as we gather around the altar to fix our gaze upon you whose throne was the Cross

and whose kingly acts were forgiveness-giving and peace-bringing,

feeds us with your very body and blood

so that we can be transformed into your disciples,

strengthened to live as you lived.

Help us to use our power to build up others, encourage others, heal others and affirm others... to be men of service.

Amen