

## **Solemnity of Christ the King – November 22, 2015**

Our celebration of Christ the King completes the Church year because it sums up the core teaching of Jesus, our crucified Savior and Risen Lord. But let's face it, we Americans have always been quite suspicious of kings ever since we jettisoned them for good in 1776. Kingship doesn't cut it with us.

But it did back in 1925 when Pope Pius XI established the feast of Christ the King. At that time, Mussolini was strutting around Italy. A man named Adolph Hitler had just been released from prison and his scary Nazi party was gaining strength. Pius XI wanted to give people a different view of what it meant to be a king. To whom should we belong? So he proposed as King, Jesus. Good choice. Unlike other kings, Jesus didn't execute his enemies; he forgave them. Unlike most kings he called his people not "subjects" or even "servants" but "friends". Kings and rulers and tyrants who made it to the top often did so by kicking others out of the way, grinding them underfoot or having them wiped out. Jesus, the one and only forever king, did not do any of that. Jesus' life was his argument about Kingship. Pilate, and the emperor he served and the might armies that conquered the world, are dust in the winds of history. Jesus has been revealed as the measure of full humanity and the promise of divine destiny for all those who follow him.

The kingdom of Jesus is not of this world, but his authority and example reach down through history to teach us how to live. As he himself tells us: "The reason I was born, the reason why I came into the world is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears my voice." Jesus, the King, excels at many things, of course. Excelling at testifying to the truth is not just a matter of speaking words but living out the truth. His life is his argument. And here's where you and I come in.

Jesus' words and life testify to 3 things: we count, I'm for you, we can do better because we are better. We count – everyone matters. I'm for you – everyone, no matter how tired or broken or lost could lean on him, rely on him, trust in him. We can do better because we are better – the deepest truth about ourselves is that we are fashioned in the image and likeness of God.

Today, Jesus our King and our brother is lifted up highest of all and continues to draw all people to himself, not by force or fear, but by the example of his life-giving love. Long live Christ the King!