

Christ the King

When the store Manager overheard one of the cashiers tell a customer, "We haven't had it for a while, and I doubt we'll be getting it soon," the Manager quickly assured the customer that we would have whatever it was she wanted by next week. After she left, the manager read the cashier about the riot act. "Never tell the customer that we're out of anything. Tell them we'll have it next week," HE instructed her. "Now, what did she want?"

"SNOW."

Dear Friends,

This week of the liturgical year we remember the solemnity of Christ the King. We are at the close of 100 years of celebration of this feast. Pope Pius XI promulgated this feast in 1925 through his encyclical *Quas primas* ("In the first") to respond to growing secularism and atheism. Pope Pius XI established the feast to be celebrated on the last Sunday of October, so that it would always take place before the celebration of the solemnity of All Saints. But in the new liturgical calendar of 1970, its Roman Rite observance was moved to the last Sunday of Ordinary Time.

In his encyclical Pope Pius XI explains the zist of the kingship and kingdom when other churches say that it is not pertain to today's democratic world. "15. This kingdom is spiritual and is concerned with spiritual things. That this is so the above quotations from Scripture amply prove, and Christ by his own action confirms it. On many occasions, when the Jews and even the Apostles wrongly supposed that the Messiah would restore the liberties and the kingdom of Israel, he repelled and denied such a suggestion. When the populace thronged around him in admiration and would have acclaimed him King, he shrank from the honor and sought safety in flight. Before the Roman magistrate he declared that his kingdom was not of this world. The gospels present this kingdom as one which men prepare to enter by penance and cannot actually enter except by faith and by baptism, which, though an external rite, signifies and produces an interior regeneration. This kingdom is opposed to none other than to that of Satan and to the power of darkness. It demands of its subjects a spirit of detachment from riches and earthly things, and a spirit of gentleness. They must hunger and thirst for justice, and more than this, they must deny themselves and carry the cross."

The first reading talks about the anointing of king David after Saul, who was portrayed as future messiah. In the second reading, St. Paul describes the purpose of Jesus kingdom and how we can relate ourselves to it.

In the Gospel, Christ is crucified. The rulers who caused this crucifixion feel no compassion. They add to his misery by mocking his mission: he saved others; himself he cannot save. One of the two thieves crucified with him mocks him too: "hey, Christ, save yourself and us!"

Christ the King says nothing. He just hangs there, nailed to the wood of the cross. What the other thief says is astonishing. He rebukes the first thief, the one mocking Jesus, in the strongest possible way. "Have you no fear of God?", he says.

If you leaned over the edge of your chair and saw a giant python inching its way across your floor, you would leap sky high, wouldn't you? You wouldn't be making any mocking jokes right then, would you? The good thief wants to get the same reaction out of the bad mocking thief. Only it isn't a python that is meant to give the bad thief a reality check. It's the awesome power of the living God.

We receive the same answer as the good thief. God is love and all the power of God is there in the love shown by Christ's painful death. To save us, and to bring us to himself in heaven, God will suffer even the torment of death on the cross. Love that is willing to suffer is greater than power that is able to coerce, and that powerful love is there on the cross.