

## **FR. JOHN'S HOMILY**

### **The Feast of Christ the King, November 29, 2020**

Thy Kingdom Come, it is a simple prayer, and yet so powerful. A prayer we pray so often it can become routine, and so mundane we forgets its importance. It is in the prayer the Our Father, in which Jesus ask of His disciples to pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. In this prayer the mystery of God's kingdom reigns within us.

The Last Sunday in Ordinary Time in this Liturgical Year is also a Feast Day, The Solemnity of Christ the King. This feast day was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI who was concerned about the state of the world in the post-World War I period, a war in which over 9 million soldiers were killed and over 21 million wounded.

After the war, people seemed to be lost about what had happened and what the future would unfold. There was fear, a lack of hope, and feelings of helplessness. Sounds very similar to present day - we are fighting a different kind of war, with same feelings of fear and helplessness with some hope that in our near future a vaccine could be available. The Feast of Christ the King was established as a reminder to all that no matter what was happening in the world, God is still in control. So we pray, Thy Kingdom Come.

It is a great reminder for us, that Jesus Christ is the King of all Creation, of the Heavens and the Earth. So why would Pope want us, the people of God to reflect on Jesus as King? The readings of today all reflect why.

It's because Jesus represents a kingship that turns our worldly idea of leadership upside down. His kingship is nonviolent; it is just and peaceful. His authority is based on the rule of truth, love and mercy. And his kingdom is present until the end of time. It is present now, even in the current midst of chaos and fear happening in the world around us. All we have to do is pray, Thy kingdom come.

Today's First Reading is from the prophet Ezekiel who is exiled in Babylon. It was the darkness time in Israel's history, once again they find themselves in captivity,

with their homeland destroyed. They would have been a people too, full of fear, helplessness, and wondering what the future would have in store for them. There would have been little hope. Yet in this time, the Word of God fills his prophet Ezekiel, who is living in the same conditions as his people, with some great words of comfort and hope. I wonder once the Israelites heard these words of Ezekiel, did it give them comfort and hope. Were they reassured knowing that God is with us, He does hear our prayers, He has not forsaken or abandoned us, I am sure it gave them hope. The Word of God today is center on the, "I" statements, with the "I" being God. Listen now to the "I" statements in light of time of darkness for Israel and Ezekiel. Where God says:

I myself will look after my people.

I myself will rescue them.

I will pasture them.

I will give them rest.

I will seek after the lost.

I will bring them back.

I will tend to the sick and ill.

I will destroy your enemies.

I will Judge between one sheep and another.

I, say God. God Himself will do these things; He doesn't say when or how, but rest assured it will happen. We know its ultimate fulfillment happened in Jesus. And Jesus will utter the fulfillment of these words, when He says, I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd lays His life down for His sheep. The sheep listen to the voice of the Shepherd. One way we show ourselves to be His sheep, part of His flock, is in the prayer, Thy Kingdom Come.

And as the Good Shepherd, He does what? He looks after His flock. He rescues us. He pastures us. He give us rest. He seeks after the Lost. He brings them back. He tends to the sick and the ill. He destroys our enemies. He judges between one sheep and the others. God is who He says He is through His son, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, He is watching over us.

This parable in Matthew we hear today is toward of the end of Jesus' life on earth. Soon Jesus will enter into His passion, suffering, death, and resurrection. The

parable of the Shepherd separating the sheep from the goats also fulfills Ezekiel's prophecy; I will judge between one sheep and the other. I being God.

The parable is about God bestowing His kingdom upon His chosen people. Upon those who prayed and allowed His kingdom to reign in their hearts. Again look at the "I" statements, except this time look who God says He resides within. When I was hungry? When I was thirsty? When I was a stranger? When I was ill? When I was in prison? When you took care of the "I", you were taking care of me, says God. Therefore, come you who are blessed by my Father, Inherit the kingdom from the foundation of the world. Thy Kingdom Come.

Inheriting the Kingdom, is what our lives are all about. This is why we pray, Thy Kingdom come. It means we recognize God's presence in our midst, and we seek His kingship in our lives, in the lives of our family, in the lives of the church, and all those we pray for. In ministering to Jesus in the "I's", we nourish the Kingdom of God within. Every act of love and charity no matter how simple or mundane is a participation into the very mystery of God's kingdom.

And those who ignore the 'I' didn't minister to the needs of the people around them and didn't recognize the presence of God in their midst. They were not praying, Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done. Only God's mystery is for those who pray, for those His chosen, for those who seek and for those who look after the 'I's'. In doing so, we center upon the Kingdom that last forever. Thy Kingdom Come.