

A vertical column of three stained glass panels. The top panel shows a portrait of Christ the King in a crown of thorns and a golden crown, holding a cross. The middle panel shows a golden chalice. The bottom panel shows a stylized cross and a chalice. A small vertical text 'Nhyob, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons' is at the bottom of the column.

November 26, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Ez 34:11-12, 15-17 | 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28 | Mt 25:31-46

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

The paradoxical ways we have come to understand Jesus can give us spiritual whip-lash. He is both a tender and caring shepherd of sheep and one who sends strong rams and goats to the eternal fire; the executed human and divine man who came into full resurrected glory. He is God incarnate into human history and born in a manger; the servant-leader; the one who is both God and man. This is the beauty of what we call the Paschal Mystery – that the Son of God came into the world and by his life, death, and resurrection he has reconciled us to the Father, and has redeemed us. He saves us from the death of sin. As Catholics we are comfortable with paradox: We are inhabitants of a kingdom of God that is already (here) but not yet (fully realized); we are both an Easter people and we live in a world of Good Fridays. So when Jesus says in today's Gospel that whatever we do to the least of people, we do to Christ himself and we will reap our actions in the fullness of that kingdom, we understand that he is a king unlike any other king. He cares not for pomp and circumstance, but wants to ensure that all – even the least among us – are given his gifts to share. The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe celebrates that we have a king who cares more for us than anyone on earth could ever care for us, and we are blessed to be able to love and serve him in return.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In the midst of our busy lives, it is no secret that our thoughts can easily be preoccupied with things other than prayer or our relationship with God. Perhaps we struggle with maintaining a daily prayer practice. So when we pause to take stock of our lives – where our attention is focused during the day-to-day – it's easy to see that God is sometimes “off to the side.” Perhaps we take everything we have been given for granted, or maybe we are just not sure how to make him the most important aspect of our lives. Just like cultivating a friendship takes active effort, so does our relationship with God. Just as watering a plant near its center allows the water to spread throughout the surrounding area, to its roots and the soil – thus making it fruitful and full – putting Jesus Christ, our king, at the center of our lives means that his goodness flows into everything else we say and do. Our lives and our hearts will grow in goodness and bear rich fruit.

INVITATION Challenge yourself this week to subvert expectations and keep God first. Show Christ is Lord over your life by prioritizing your faith and building up your priorities around him. Make a daily appointment in your calendar for prayer and look for opportunities to put Christ at the center, or heart, of your daily life.