



On this "Reign of Christ" Sunday we consider the way the reign of Christ is different from that of earthly kings and rulers. Different even from the beloved King David of Scripture. Pope Pius XI instituted "Christ the King" Sunday (now preferably called "Reign of Christ") as a way to encourage the faithful to prioritize the justice inherent of Christ's reign over and against the injustice inherent in that of earthly kings. How is Christ's reign different? Because Christ sees every person. Even those we might consider "godless" or "wicked" or "enemy." The reign of Christ is about the global community of humanity and the renewal that comes with living in the kin-dom.

Questions for Reflection:

- How is Christ's reign different from earthly kings and rulers?
- In the John passage, what does Jesus tell Pilate about his kingdom?
- In what ways does the 2 Samuel passage describe Jesus as the ideal ruler?
- Why do you think Jesus chooses to use his power to take care of and love all persons?

Spiritual Practice – Gratitude and Thanksgiving

As the seasons change and the colorful fall leaves float to the ground and the calendar moves to November, our thoughts are naturally drawn to Thanksgiving. While I am thankful for this yearly reminder to give thanks, I am challenged to remember that giving thanks is not a discipline meant only for the 4th Thursday in November.

Forms of the word 'thanks' or 'thanksgiving' are found throughout the Bible. Not as a once a year occurrence but rather a regular expression of praise to God. Giving thanks is to be a way of life. There is no denying that life is challenging. But too often we are so caught up in the challenges of life, focusing so much of our energy on our struggles and burdens that we miss the blessings. We overlook the gift that God has given us in Christ Jesus and forget to thank God and celebrate the blessings we have in Christ!

Henry Nowen, spiritual writer, wrote this about gratitude, "In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to celebrate with joy."

In a 2015 article for Psychology Today, psychotherapist Amy Morin cited 7 scientifically proven health benefits to giving thanks that can transform your life. While these benefits are important to note and may motivate us to practice living thanksgiving, gratitude is more than something we do because of the benefits. We give thanks because it is a natural overflow of a life lived in community with God and others.

Try one or more of the following activities to practice gratitude and thanksgiving:

- Create a gratitude journal to help you be more mindful of all that God has done for you. Write or draw pictures of what you are thankful for. Responding with your prayers of thankfulness is one way to worship God in your daily life.
- Make a Blessing Jar and have family members write what they are thankful for on slips of paper to place inside the jar. Read them together on Thanksgiving. Pray and give thanks to God!
- Use the included coloring page to express what you are grateful for individually or as a family activity.

