

Christ, Not Just Jesus, the King

Christ the King (Year C)

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Whenever we think of our Lord, we think of a Jewish man who lived about 2,000 years ago in Palestine. He was born to a young woman named Mary and had a father named Joseph. He was a carpenter by trade before he went out for 3 years to publicly preach the good news. He established a group of friends known as the disciples. After 3 years, he experienced so much pushback that he was put to death by crucifixion. This was Jesus.

Today's feast is *Christ* the King. While we oftentimes use Jesus and Christ interchangeably, it is important to understand that Christ is a much broader term than Jesus. While Jesus certainly is our Lord, Jesus applies to the man who lived in history for 33 years. Christ applies to the person who was present with God the Father from the very beginning of creation. Christ was present with the Father from all eternity, long before Jesus was born in history. Christ is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of everything.

Our second reading today from Colossians can be really hard for us to understand if we are thinking of Jesus:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together...He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him.

This doesn't make sense!? Jesus was born in time, so how could he be the firstborn of all creation, the one through whom all other things were

created, and the one who holds all things together? But let me re-read this passage in reference to Christ.

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Christ were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible; all things were created through Christ and for Christ. Christ is before all things, and in Christ all things hold together...Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things Christ might be preeminent. For in Christ all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through Christ to reconcile all things for Christ.

Now, it makes sense.

This has huge implications for us. While we believe that Jesus is the Christ, we are ultimately called Christians, with more of an emphasis on Christ. As followers of Christ, we follow the one who was before all things, holds all things together, and reconciles all things. Again, this most certainly includes Jesus, the Jewish man who lived 2,000 years ago, but it also encompasses a much broader horizon that is not limited by time or geography, race, culture, or even creed. Christ is present in all people, in all things, and in all times. That was what Jesus was trying to tell us. The universe is permeated with Christ. The full title for today's feast is actually 'Christ, the King of the Universe.' This is much broader than a doctrine about Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus points us to the Christ who is and always has been the King of the Universe.

Do I try to see Christ in all people and in all things? Even if someone doesn't physically resemble Jesus as I think he looked, can I still see Christ in them?

Today, we don't just honor 'Jesus the King.' In fact, that term was used as a mockery by the soldiers in today's Gospel at the crucifixion. Today, we honor 'Christ the King.'