

**A Jewish boy was lazy in his studies and misbehaved in the public school. So, his parents enrolled him in a Catholic School to see if would improve. His parents were surprised to observe that the boy stopped his excessive watching of TV, limited his time on computer games and spent most of his time in studies. At the end of the year, he was the best student in class. His baffled parents asked him what had happened. “The first day I went to school,” he explained, “and saw that man hanging on a plus sign at the main entrance of the school building, I knew you couldn’t fool around here and get away with it.”**

**Today’s Gospel reminds us that the Man on the cross is not an object to frighten naughty kids, but our God, our King and Savior who died for us promising us eternal life, and who will come in glory to judge the world on the day of the Last Judgment.**

**Today we honor Jesus Christ as our King. Our scripture readings do not picture Him as a typical king. In our first reading Ezekiel, the prophet, pictures God as a shepherd. God is distressed with the shepherds of His people, that is, the kings and religious leaders of Israel.**

**They led God's people away from God and to eventual disaster when the Babylonians invaded, destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, and exiled Israel's king and the people to Babylon. God said He would lead them rightly. We see this prophecy perfectly fulfilled in Jesus. In our second reading St. Paul is writing on the topic of the resurrection. Paul tells us that the risen Lord will reign until all evil in the world is destroyed, even death, and then He will turn the Kingdom over to the Father. In the Gospel, Jesus is pictured as a judge, a judge who judges us on how we behave toward the lowly and the poor. Thus we have three images of Christ the King: a shepherd, the risen Lord and judge of all nations.**

**The Franciscan Order, following the lead of its great thirteenth century theologians St. Bonaventure and Blessed Don Scotus, was instrumental in establishing the Feast of Christ the King and extending the celebration to the universal Church. But it was Pope Pius XI who instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925 for the universal Church in his encyclical Quas Primas because the people of the day had "thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law out of their lives," believing**

**“these had no place in public affairs or in politics.” He connected the increasing denial of Christ as King to the rise of secularism throughout Europe. At the time of Quas Primas, many Christians, including Catholics, had begun to doubt Christ’s authority and existence, as well as the Church’s power to continue Christ’s authority, because they witnessed the rise of non-Christian dictatorships in Europe, namely, the totalitarian governments of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. Pope Pius XI hoped the institution of the feast of Christ the King would have the following effects: 1. That nations would see that the Church has the right to freedom, and immunity from the state. 2. That leaders and nations would see that they are bound to give respect to Christ. 3. That the faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Christ reigns in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies.**

**In the 1920s, a totalitarian regime gained control of Mexico and tried to suppress the Church. To resist the regime, many Christians took up the cry, “Viva Cristo Rey!” “Long Live Christ the King!” They called themselves “Cristeros.” The most famous Cristero was**

**a young Jesuit priest named Padre Miguel Pro. Using various disguises, Padre Pro ministered to the people of Mexico City. Finally, the government arrested him and sentenced him to public execution on November 23, 1927. The president of Mexico, Plutarco Calles, thought that Padre Pro would beg for mercy, so he invited the press to the execution. Padre Pro did not plead for his life, but instead knelt before a crucifix. When he finished his prayer, he kissed the crucifix and stood up. Holding the crucifix in his right hand, he extended his arms and shouted, “Viva Cristo Rey!” At that moment the soldiers fired. The journalists took pictures; if you look up “Padre Pro” or “Saint Miguel Pro” on the internet, you can see that picture. On Monday, November 23, we celebrate the feast of Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro, priest and martyr.**

**Today Gospel passage teaches us that the main criterion of the Last Judgment will be the works of Christian charity, knowingly or unknowingly. The account tells us that Christ, the judge, is going to ask us six questions, and all of them based on how we cooperated with**

**God's grace to do acts of charity, kindness and mercy for others, because Jesus actually dwells in them.**

**The first set of questions: "I was hungry, thirsty, homeless. Did you give me food, drink, accommodation?" The second set of questions: "I was naked, sick, imprisoned. Did you clothe me? Did you help me by visiting me in my illness or in prison?" If the answers are yes, we will be eternally rewarded because we have cooperated with God's grace by practicing charity. But if the answers are negative, we will be eternally punished.**

**The best way to honor Christ the King is to work for the unfolding and promoting of His Kingdom. In working for the relief of deprived, oppressed or marginalized people, we are serving Christ in person, because He fully identified with people in need, right up to His final moment in this life – "Today you will be with me in paradise" Jesus says to the repentant thief.**

**The disciple of Christ the King cannot afford the luxury of living in a gated community, resolutely secure in a fortress, comfortably "keeping myself to myself" with the lame claim that "I do nobody any harm." To be deaf**

**to the cries of my neighbor in need is to be deaf to Christ. To be blind to the anguish of the dying is to be blind to Christ. To recognize Jesus Christ as our Shepherd-King involves being carers or shepherds in some way ourselves; for the work of the Kingdom goes on until He comes again.**

**You might have had the experience of doing something for somebody and only subsequently discovering that it meant far more to that person than you realized at the time you did it. We are not always aware of the good we might be doing. We don't always appreciate how significant our actions for others or how much our presence means to them. We may think we are doing nothing particularly worthwhile, when we in fact may be doing something of real value.**

**It can be difficult for us to realize that in our ordinary dealings with each other we are in real sense dealing with the Lord, and that is especially true when we are confronted with others in all their brokenness and need. It is in the ordinary, every day affairs of life that we are responding to the Lord. The care that someone gives to a sick relative is care given to the Lord, whether**

**that is realized or not. The welcome we give to a stranger who feels vulnerable in a foreign environment is a welcome given to the Lord. The way we relate to prisoners or ex-prisoners helping them to find a meaningful role in our society, so that they can build a new life for themselves that is crime-free, reveals how we relate to the Lord.**

**On this feast of Christ the King, we His disciples are invited to be His loyal citizens by rendering humble service to others and by sharing Christ's mercy and forgiveness with others.**

**Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus imperat!  
Christ conquers! Christ rules! Christ reigns!**

**Viva Cristo Rey! Long Live Christ the King!**