

Christ the King – Year B (2021)

If you've ever had a problem getting a refund for a defective product, or resolving an undeserved bank fee, or just trying to renew your driver's license, you know that it can be quite frustrating. Sometimes things work out exactly as planned, and you walk away thinking, "That wasn't so bad."

But often it doesn't go that way. Things don't get solved easily. Frustration builds. You feel like you are just repeating yourself over and over—and not getting any satisfaction. Finally, you just can't take it anymore, and you say, quite politely, "I need to speak with the person in charge!"

It's important to know who's in charge, right? Whenever one of you has an issue with the parish, and you feel like you're not getting anywhere, you want to talk to the person in charge.

And that's good. It's necessary for a civil society. The military can't function without it. The government can't either. The same is true for schools and businesses. And it's true for St. Francis of Assisi parish. Without knowing who's in charge, chaos and confusion and frustration will ensue.

Today we gather on the last Sunday of this year of grace—the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. It's the perfect time to assess how we are doing on our journey of faith over the last twelve months.

After all, most of our wandering off the path comes about when we lose track of who's in charge, lose track of who we can turn to when we are confused or lost or unsure of what to do. And so, when that happens, our lives can become a little unsettled, a little chaotic, a little off kilter as we struggle to get back on track.

It's not easy to know exactly what Jesus wants us to do or expects us to do in every situation. In fact, it's impossible. God is not some kind of micro-manager hovering over us forcing us to do what he wants.

Our King wants to lead us in two ways. First, by following his example. And so, we look to Jesus to see how to live. We look to Jesus to see what it means to be fully human and fully alive. We look to Jesus to know how we are called to think and act and see.

But our incredible King also leads us a second way, through his Word, through the Holy Spirit, through the sacramental life of the Church. Our Lord and King is continually trying to guide us and motivate us and encourage us and console us and challenge us.

That's how he wants to be "in charge"—through the profound, unlimited love and grace he pours out on us in every moment of our lives.

So, here's the question. Is Christ our King? Is Jesus in charge? Or is something or someone else calling the shots?

- Maybe it's our **ego**: leading us to believe that we are the center of the universe.
- Or maybe it's our **pride**: leading us to never admit that we are wrong or that we have weaknesses and faults.
- Maybe it's our **passions**: luring us to give in to desires that we know aren't at all healthy for us.
- Or maybe it's our need for **control**: that need to always be the decision-maker.
- Maybe it's our **hardened hearts**: keeping us from forgiving those who have wronged us.
- Or maybe it's our **greed**: tempting us to cling to the things of this world as if they were most important.
- And maybe it's our **prejudice**: those attitudes that drive us to see others as somehow less than ourselves.

The things we allow to be in charge— the “kings” in our lives, come in all shapes and sizes. It’s up to us to admit them and revoke our allegiance to them.

It’s up to us to keep looking to the life of Jesus as an example to follow. And it’s up to us to keep listening for the voice of God and when we hear it, be ready and willing to let it lead us to where we need to be.

And remember, following Jesus our King is simple, but it is never easy.