

July 14, 2019 Lord of All Creation Homily: In February of 2016, a funeral mass was celebrated for a prominent Catholic layman and distinguished Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia at the National Shrine of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.. As expected, the late jurist's requiem mass attracted a large crowd of admirers, family members and friends. Upon entering the basilica, one of the largest churches in America, the mourners likely cast their eyes on an enormous mosaic of an exalted Christ, located high above the altar in the sanctuary. This great work of art never fails to capture the attention of the visitor to the great church. Attired in a deep red toga, Christ is depicted as seated on high. His dominion embraces not only the assembled worshippers but also the whole of creation. His glory fills the universe (Is.6:3). All in the basilica must raise their eyes to Him. He is the supreme ruler and judge.

Paul's letter to the Colossians was written while the apostle was a prisoner in Rome. According to reputable scholars, today's second reading is from the letter's first chapter (Col.1:15-20), and is a primitive Christian hymn and, what's more, a profound proclamation of faith. Paul paints a splendid portrait of Christ as the center of the universe and the head of the Church. The entire cosmos, all that exists, is subject to him. Why is Jesus above all things? Clearly, because Paul truly believes that he is the Eternal Word of God. In Him, all things were created. He is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) He makes the visible God visible by his coming in the flesh.

In Paul's day one could point to scores of exotic religions and strange philosophies littering the landscape. It is no different today. In the twenty-first century, new religions continue to spring up, often resulting in a significant spike in new, enthusiastic followers. One need only consider the popularity of the occult and novel religions such as Scientology and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Many scientists continue to insist that higher forms of life are likely to be found in our galaxy, and that human beings can no longer boast of being special or superior. Even the recent popularity of so-called superheroes in comic books and film (Superman, Captain Marvel, Adam Strange, the Silver Surfer, etc.) reflect the view that extraterrestrials have an advantage over us mere earthlings. They possess superior strength, run faster and are gifted with a superior intelligence. St. Paul assures his readers that Jesus Christ is superior to all the so-called spirits of the world. They are under his control. "For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all were created through him and for him". (Col. 1:16)

Today, Christ appears to be shrinking in the hearts and minds of too many in our secular Western world. He is no longer "above us" as our crucified and risen Lord, Savior and Judge. He is "the incredible shrinking God". Too often He has disappeared from our view. And it is no fault but our own! A recent survey in Great Britain reveals that thirty six percent of those interviewed claim to be atheists, and only twenty-six per cent Christian. How sad and tragic!

As Roman Catholics, we truly believe that at each of our Eucharistic celebrations the exalted Christ, the Christ of Glory, draws near to us and is within reach of all the faithful. And this is the great paradox of the Catholic faith: the One who is above all that exists humbles Himself and comes among us as food and drink, his sacred Body and Blood.

Among all the gods of antiquity only one God stands alone and is above all, namely, Jesus Christ, the Lord of all creation.

Amen!