

Homily Christ the King 2021

There is a famous painting by William Holman Hunt entitled *The Light of the World*. The painting was completed in 1853. I am sure that many of you have seen the painting. It portrays Jesus standing, dressed as a king, knocking on a door covered with dead and overgrown foliage. He waits, lantern in hand. There is no handle or door knob. Rather, he must wait until someone from the inside opens the door. The door can only be opened from the inside.



That door symbolizes each one of us no matter where we are on our spiritual journey. Jesus cannot, so to speak, come into our houses, our homes, into us unless we let him in.

Today's celebration is the Feast of Christ the King. Just like the king in the painting, Christ our King, stands outside us, our doors, waiting for us to let him in.

But who is that Christ, what kind of king is he? Our readings give us a glimpse of this Jesus in his kingly role. Daniel's vision in the first reading portrays a Jesus whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, a kingship that shall not be destroyed. Then, the Book of Revelation, the second reading, tells us that Jesus is the "ruler of the kings of the earth" "whom every eye shall see" "the beginning and the end."

This type of language seems to portray Jesus as a very strong ruler. With that in mind we could reasonably think and say "Well, that will never happen. There are way too many other rulers in our universe. Besides, his message is much too difficult and runs contrary to all that we

hold dear."

Christ's kingship is very different from secular kingship in several different ways. Civil leaders want domination. Unfortunately, we see the theme of domination so often in civil and world leaders. Jesus claims that his leadership, one that we should imitate is rooted in service to others, not in domination.

Another difference in Christ's mode of leadership concerns the ego. So many leaders want to look good. Looking good can be important, but

Christ the King tells us to accept ourselves as we are. Now, when we say to accept ourselves as we are, it does not mean e.g. if we are lazy, then just accept that. No, it means that we accept ourselves as we truly are: sons and daughters of God the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. We are called to greatness. We need to accept that call and live it.

In speaking with Pilate, Jesus makes it very clear that his kingdom is not of this world, his kingdom does not engage with the struggles of the world. Rather, his kingdom to which we are called can transcend the struggles of this world. Yes, we live amid the struggles of this world, but we are called to go beyond this world. I know this sounds confusing, but look at it this way. We are on a staircase. We have one foot in this world, but the other foot is on the next step moving us upward. Sometimes we think we can run up the steps. Other times, we wonder if we can make it to the next step. The answer is simple. Yes, we can because that's where we belong, always on the next step.

To travel on this spiritual journey, to move from one step to the next, we need nourishment from this King of the Universe, Jesus Christ. When we receive the Eucharist we are definitely on that journey, we are being given the boost to go to the next step. Let us pray that as we celebrate the Eucharist, may this heavenly food transform us so that we may truly become what we receive.