

On this final Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church invites us to celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ as King of the Universe. In the first two readings, the apocalypses of Daniel and John give us images of Jesus' kingship: the Son of Man coming in glory at the end of time on the clouds of heaven. The gospel shows us something else.

In the gospel we find Jesus in humiliating circumstances. He stands accused before the might of Rome. He has been arrested, insulted, mocked, and now his enemies hope to obtain his condemnation to death by crucifixion. They had presented him to Pilate as one who sought political power, as the self-proclaimed King of the Jews. During the trial, Pilate asks Jesus: "Are you the King of the Jews?" In reply to this question, Jesus clarifies the nature of his kingship and his messiahship itself. He is not here to rule but to serve. He states that his kingdom is in no way to be confused with anything political or worldly: "My kingdom does not belong to this world."

Jesus had no political ambitions. You all remember what happened after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. The people wanted to carry Jesus off and make him a king. They wanted him to lead an army that would cast out the Romans and reinstate the glory of the Davidic kingdom. He could have gone along with their desires but instead he went off by himself and climbed a mountain and prayed. Jesus knows that His Father's kingdom is a completely different kind of kingdom; it is not built on arms and violence. Pilate didn't understand this.

Jesus stood before Pilate as a prisoner, a man on trial for his life. In Pilate's eyes, what kind of king could this Jesus possibly be? Pilate asked Jesus an odd question: "So you are a king?" And Jesus gave an equally odd answer: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate was worried about a rebellion or an army preparing to invade the city. Instead Jesus speaks not about power, but about truth. This was incomprehensible to Pilate. What is truth in the face of the power of the Roman Empire? Can there be a power not obtained by human means? A power which does not respond to the logic of domination and force? Jesus represents something entirely new. He came to reveal and bring a new kingship, that of God. He came to bear witness to the truth of a God who is love. He came to bear witness to a God who wants to establish a kingdom of justice, love, and peace. Pilate cannot understand. What kind of king is this man who stands before him?

How would we react if we were in Pilate's place, face to face with Jesus? How **DO** we react? We come face to face with Jesus during every Mass. **“Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the lamb.”** When the priest holds up the Body of Christ over the chalice that contains his Precious blood, you are looking into the face of Jesus, the King of the Universe. He is hidden beneath the appearances of bread and wine but he is truly there. The King of the Universe, through whom all things are made, is being held up in the hands of one of his very unworthy creatures. And then that same King allows himself to be placed in the hands or on the tongue of all those who come forward to receive him in communion. Take some time to think about that. The Divine King of the Universe has humbled himself to share in our humanity. We literally hold him in the palms of our hands.

Another way in which we come face to face with the King of the Universe is during Eucharistic Adoration. We are looking at him and he is looking at us. What does Jesus see when he looks at us? He doesn't look at us the way most kings look upon their subjects. When he looks at us he sees each one of us as his beloved brothers and sisters, the adopted children of his heavenly father. When we misbehave and go astray, he never tires of going in search of us and bringing us back home. Well, maybe he does get tired of it but he does it anyway because that's how much he loves us; if Jesus didn't love us, he'd just let us go.

Mother Teresa once said, “Every Holy Hour we make so pleases the Heart of Jesus that it is recorded in Heaven and retold for all eternity! When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then (as he was dying for you on the cross). When you look at Jesus' body in the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now.”

Jesus wants us to spend time with him. Not because he needs it, but because we do. He wants us to know how much he loves us. The reason he gave us his body and blood in the form of the Eucharist is so that he could always be physically present with us. He wants to be here for us so that we can visit him in person and share with him all of our joys and sorrows. He wants to fill us with his life and his light. What happens to us when we come into our Lord's Eucharistic presence? Imagine it's January or February and we've been stuck in our infamous Rogue Valley inversion and the fog hasn't allowed us to see the sky or the sun for a month and the temperature has barely risen above freezing. Then one day there is a breeze and the fog blows out, the sky turns blue, and the sun radiates down on us

with a gentle warmth. All you want to do is just sit out on the grass and soak up the sun's rays. That is what Jesus does to us when we come before him during adoration and he's there waiting for us in the adoration chapel twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Advent starts next weekend. This year during Advent, make visiting Jesus in the blessed sacrament a priority. Come and rest in the warmth of his light and experience his merciful love. The King of the Universe is waiting for you.