



The Solemnity of Christ the King, officially known as the **Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**, is one of the most recent feasts in the Catholic liturgical calendar, yet it has deeply theological and spiritual roots. Celebrated on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, just before the start of Advent, this feast invites us to reflect on the kingship of Christ—not only in an eschatological sense but also in our daily lives and in the modern world.

In this article, we will explore the history of this celebration, its theological significance, the symbolism behind the feast, and how to live this solemnity in the context of our faith and everyday lives.

The History of the Solemnity of Christ the King

The celebration of Christ the King was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 through the encyclical *Quas Primas*. Understanding the historical context of this decision is essential to grasp its significance.

A World in Crisis

In 1925, the world was experiencing a period of great tension. The aftermath of World War I had left humanity in an atmosphere of distrust, heightened nationalism, and economic crises. At the same time, secularism was advancing, relegating religion to the private sphere and promoting ideologies that denied God's sovereignty, such as communism, fascism, and materialism.

Pope Pius XI, in instituting the Solemnity of Christ the King, sought to remind the faithful that Christ not only reigns in heaven but also on earth. The Pope proclaimed that Christ's authority is universal, encompassing all nations, cultures, and political systems. His reign is not one of oppression but of justice, peace, and love.

The Feast's Place in the Liturgical Calendar

Initially, the feast was celebrated on the last Sunday of October, but after the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, it was moved to the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, marking the culmination of the liturgical year. This change emphasizes the eschatological nature of Christ's kingship, which will be fully realized at the end of time.



The Theological Meaning of Christ the King

Christ as Universal King

The title of “King” ascribed to Jesus has deep biblical roots. In the Old Testament, the prophets foretold the coming of a Messiah who would be King:

- **Isaiah 9:6-7** proclaims, “His dominion will be vast, and there will be no end to the peace on the throne of David.”
- **Zechariah 9:9** speaks of a humble king arriving on a donkey, foreshadowing Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Christ’s kingship is fully revealed. Jesus declares before Pilate: *“My kingdom is not of this world”* (John 18:36). This statement does not imply that His reign is irrelevant on earth but that it does not operate according to human standards of power. His kingdom is built on truth, justice, and love.

A Reign of Service and Sacrifice

Unlike earthly kings, who seek to impose their will through power, Christ reigns from the cross. The cross, a symbol of humiliation to the world, is the throne from which Jesus exercises His authority. His crown is not made of gold but of thorns, and His scepter is not a rod of command but the nails that pierced His hands.

Christ’s kingship reminds us that true leadership lies in service: *“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

Symbols of the Feast of Christ the King

The Throne

The throne of Christ is the cross, a reminder that His reign is not one of domination but of redemptive love.



The Crown

The crown of thorns symbolizes the suffering and humiliation Christ endured for our redemption. At the same time, it anticipates the crown of glory He receives as King of the Universe.

The Scepter

In Christian iconography, Christ's scepter is often depicted as a shepherd's staff, reminding us that He is the Good Shepherd who guides His people with tenderness.

The Robe

The royal robe, often depicted in images of Christ the King, symbolizes the justice and holiness of His reign.

The Relevance of Christ the King in Today's World

A Call to Hope

In a world marked by divisions, wars, inequalities, and the relentless pursuit of power, the Solemnity of Christ the King invites us to focus on a kingdom that endures forever.

Christ's kingship reminds us that the final word does not belong to political, economic, or social systems but to God. This truth gives us hope amid adversity.

A Challenge for Believers

Acknowledging Christ as King means accepting His sovereignty in every aspect of our lives:

1. **In our personal decisions:** Do we act according to Gospel values?
2. **In our relationships:** Do we promote justice, peace, and forgiveness?
3. **In society:** Do we work to build a more humane and compassionate world?



Living the Solemnity of Christ the King

Renewing Our Faith

The feast of Christ the King is an opportunity to renew our commitment to Jesus. We can do this through:

- **The Eucharist**, proclaiming that Christ is the center of our lives.
- **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**, acknowledging His real and reigning presence.
- **Prayer**, asking that His kingdom become a reality in us and in the world.

Commitment to the Vulnerable

Recognizing Christ as King also means seeing Him in the most vulnerable and needy. As He Himself said:

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Witnessing in Daily Life

Proclaiming Christ as King is not merely a liturgical act; it is a call to live consistently with our faith in every aspect of life, from family to work to the community.

Conclusion

The Solemnity of Christ the King is much more than a liturgical celebration; it is a proclamation of faith, hope, and love. In a world often lost in the noise of power and ideologies, this feast reminds us that only in Christ do we find the true meaning of life.

Acknowledging Jesus as King of the Universe is not just an act of devotion but a commitment to a reign that transforms hearts, communities, and societies. As we celebrate this solemnity, let us open our hearts so that He may reign in our lives, guiding us toward a world of greater justice, peace, and love.