

## From the Pastor's Desk

### Are you the king of the Jews?

Today we celebrate the **Solemnity of Christ the King**. Perhaps calling Jesus Christ a “king” feels a little odd or uncomfortable to us who have never experienced directly a king, or queen, or even a duke for that matter. So maybe, “Christ, the president”? — that certainly doesn't work! How about “the boss”? — terrible too! Christ “the dictator”? — far from good. Christ, “the lord”? Certainly better, but even the word lord comes from a political system.

So what are we trying to say with the title **Christ, the King**? We are acknowledging that Jesus Christ is supreme, above all temporal rulers, past, present and future. By calling Christ a king, we acknowledge that Christ has a kingdom, a reign, a realm and has people subject to him. We recognize that Christ should be the one who governs us. By the title “Christ the King” we acclaim that Christ does **reign in our own lives**, guiding us in our thoughts, decisions and actions. In both the universe of all creation and the universe of our own hearts, Jesus Christ is Lord!

That means that we listen to Christ's voice. We humbly listen to the **Word of the Lord**. Though the scriptures were written by many different human authors, many different types of authors — storytellers, historians, prophets, psalmists, letter writers, worship leaders, apostles, evangelists — and in different forms — historical narratives, myths, genealogies, parables, poems, testimonies, letters, gospels — God is the true source of the writing. It is God who inspired the human authors to write what they wrote, the true message of which was often not fully known to them. In other words, all of the Scriptures is the **Word of God**.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells Pilate that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to his voice. We have been gifted with the truth of faith and we listen to the Word of the Lord.

Most solemnities are focused on biblical events and persons. In contrast, today's solemnity is focused on an idea. The original motivation for today's feast was to celebrate the dominion of Christ that transcends

national boundaries. It was established in 1925, in the aftermath of the Great War and the rise of nationalism, which often served to divide people and cultures. It was meant to inspire all of Christianity of our oneness as children of God. And, as such, we should embrace each other, not war against each other. Yet, still today, nearly one hundred years later, the powers of the world are no closer to a just and lasting peace. War and terrorism torment many areas of the world. But in Jesus Christ we have a kingdom that is not of this world. It is Christ who governs us. We must recognize our mission — to build up Christ's realm, to build up the **Kingdom of God**.

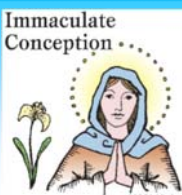
That is why the collection for the **Campaign for Human Development** is usually taken up on or near this day.

Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world, meaning it does not have physical boundaries, is not a specific or contained area. Rather, it is a kingdom of people. We are the Kingdom of God! It is our responsibility to build up that kingdom. We are entrusted to this mission by the identity we received in baptism when we “put on Christ.” We may be citizens of our nation, but we belong to the Body of Christ.

Pilate asks Jesus, “*Are you the king of the Jews?*” Jesus does not answer Pilate directly, knowing that a simple answer would be misleading. Both Pilate, the Jewish leaders, and the general public held assumptions that do not apply to the kingship of Christ. Jesus is not a typical king, nor is he the kind of Messiah the Jews were expecting, not a revolutionary who aimed to take political power by force or charisma. Jesus is way beyond such notions, with a greater mission and a greater kingdom than anyone was expecting. His is the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and peace, a kingdom of righteousness and grace, a kingdom of life and love.

We must ask ourselves, how well do we advance the kingdom Jesus came to create?

Fr. Bob



**The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, on Saturday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, is a Holy Day of Obligation, celebrating Mary being conceived free from sin in St. Anne's womb.

**Mass times:** Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM at St. Francis

Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM at St. Stephen

*Going to regular mass on Saturday evening (4:00 or 6:30 PM) DOES NOT satisfy this Obligation.*