

# **The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**

## **Sunday November 21, 2021**

### **Opening Prayer:**

Almighty, everlasting God, Who in Thy beloved Son, King of the whole world, has willed to restore all things anew; grant in Thy Mercy that all the families of nations, rent asunder by the wound of sin, may be subjected to His most gentle rule. Who with Thee lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

### **Prayer for Reading 1**

Christ, perfect ruler, source of perfect peace and justice: reign now and forever over all creation, all peoples, all languages, nations; over our hearts.

### **Reading I:            Dn 7:13-14**

As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a Son of man coming, on the clouds of heaven; when he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, the one like a Son of man received dominion, glory, and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed.

### **Responsorial Psalm:            Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5**

**R. (1a) The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.**

The LORD is king, in splendor robed;  
robed is the LORD and girt about with strength.

**R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.**

And he has made the world firm,  
not to be moved.

Your throne stands firm from of old;  
from everlasting you are, O LORD.

**R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.**

Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed;  
holiness befits your house,  
O LORD, for length of days.

**R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.**

### **Questions for Reading 1**

1. Compare and contrast Jesus' "kingdom" with countries that have powerful political organizations. Are the objectives somewhat different in God's kingdom and, for instance, the USA?
2. What things hold power over you in your life? Are they good things or would you like to see them lose some of their hold?

### **Prayer for Reading 2**

Jesus, please be the beginning and end of our every day, our every project, and prayer, and peril, and love: everything we do and all that we are.

**Reading II:        Rv 1:5-8**

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. All the peoples of the earth will lament him. Yes. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, " says the Lord God, "the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

**Questions for Reading 2**

1. This reading holds that Christ "has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father." The Jerusalem Bible says that in union with Jesus, the messianic priest, we will consecrate the universe to God in a sacrifice of praise. How can you cooperate in this consecration ("making holy") of the universe to God? Is working on the care for creation a way of consecrating the universe?
2. Does the universe that you consecrate to God include areas of your life or the world that previously you might have considered outside the realm of "holy"?

**Prayer for Gospel**

Oh Jesus, before you came we only guessed at the truth. Could we have known that God loved the poor, that God healed the brokenhearted, the sick and the distressed? Nor that God would offer his very Son for our sake? Yours is the kingdom of love. Help us know, belong and testify with you to this loving truth.

**Gospel:        Jn 18:33b-37**

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

## Questions for Gospel

1. Can we understand truth differently at different times? Was there a time when we accepted slavery? Do we now question the death penalty? Should the Church mature in judgment as we grow in understanding of truth?
2. What does “testifying to the truth” mean? Does it mean defending our ideas? What is one small or large way you can be prophetic or testify to the truth?

Keeping the truth does not mean defending ideas, becoming guardians of a system of doctrines and dogmas but remaining bound to Christ and being devoted to his Gospel. ... To keep the truth means to be a prophet in every situation in life, ... offering our lives for others. ...

Jesus has no use for the lukewarm. He wants us to be consecrated in the truth and the beauty of the Gospel, so that we can testify to the joy of God’s kingdom even in the dark night of grief, even when evil seems to have the upper hand.”

Pope Francis to Myanmar Catholics  
America Magazine. May 16, 2021

## *In Exile* by Ron Rolheiser

### Happiness and Meaning

“Are you happy?” How would you answer that honestly?

My suspicion is that, for most of us, this would be a painful question which, given our fantasy of what happiness should be, we would tend to answer in the negative: “no, I don’t think I’m happy. I would like to be, but there are too many limitations and frustrations in my life which block happiness.”

“Are you happy?”

To stare that question square in the face can make you more unhappy. A torturous self-scrutiny can result from it. What this suggests is that perhaps it is not a good question to ask in the first place. To ask myself: “Am I happy?” is to confuse things and to begin to demand things from life and from God that are not realistic.

For a Christian, there is a better question. The essential question should not be, “Am I happy?” but rather, “is my life meaningful?” That is a different question, one which can help purify our perspective on things.

What God has promised us in Christ is not, as is unfortunately so often preached and believed, a life free from pain, sickness, loneliness, oppression, and death. The preacher who tells you that you will have less pain in life if you take Jesus seriously is not in touch with the gospel. What the incarnation promises is not that Christ will do away with our pain, but that God will be with us in that pain.

That is something quite different. In fact, one can go further and say the opposite: If you take the gospel seriously, you will probably have more pain in your life because you will be a more sensitive person.

To take the gospel seriously is not to be given immunity from the human condition. No. For the Christian, as for everyone else, there will be the same sicknesses, the same cold lonely seasons, the same painful frustrations, the same choices that are regretted, and the same bitter losses. Like everyone else, too, eventually we will have to face death.

Faith in God does not, in this world, save one from pain, misunderstanding, loneliness, and death. Faith does not offer a life free of pain. What God does promise is to be with us in that pain. That is why our Savior's name is Emmanuel, a name which means God-is-with-us.

To have faith in God is to have God with you. This, as Avery Dulles once so aptly put it, does not give you a ladder to crawl out of the human condition, but a drill to burrow into the heart of it: Jesus enables us to believe that human life, with all its contradictions, is the place where God is preeminently found. Unlike every other mythology, the myth of the Incarnation gives us strength to face up to the harsh realities of our fragmented world, to feel and to transmit the touch of God's reconciling love. The Incarnation does not provide us with a ladder by which to escape from the ambiguities of this life and scale the heights of heaven. Rather it enables us to burrow deep into the heart of the planet earth and find it shimmering with divinity.

For the Christian, then, the important question is not: "Am I happy?" but "Is my life meaningful?" By asking the latter question rather than the former one, I do not torture myself with some unattainable romantic ideal and, more importantly, I do not ask God to exempt me from the human condition. My life is meaningful precisely when I sense God's presence in the midst of my suffering, sicknesses, loneliness, and pain.

My faith should never pressure me to ask God to exempt me from these. Why should I be spared the human condition? Rather my faith should allow me to stand inside of every reality in my life, positive and negative, and see some meaning in it.

"Is my life meaningful?" When I ask the question this way the perspective is very different. Now my happiness will no longer depend upon my never getting sick, or upon my never getting lonely, or upon my never being misunderstood, or upon my never making wrong choices, or on somehow being exempt from death's shadow.

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Life can be frustrating and still be very meaningful. We can be lonely, sick, sorrowful about wrong choices, over-worked and unappreciated, staring old age and death in the face and still experience deep meaning. Happiness will be a by-product of that.

Are my symbols working? Is my faith deep enough so that every corner of my experience, no matter how painful, makes some sense in a higher plan? Is God with me as I walk through both health and sickness, joy and sorrow, friendship and loneliness, success and failure, youth and aging? Does my life have a meaning?

The question about happiness comes after that question.

<http://liturgy.slu.edu/index.html>

(main site from which the Bible study is composed)