

# Christ's Kingship Portrays Love

Kathy Kuczka

On the final Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Pope Pius XI established this commemoration in 1925 to emphasize the supreme authority of Christ over all. The pope said in his encyclical, *Quas primas*, on the feast:

Nations will be reminded by the annual celebration that not only private individuals but rulers and princes are bound to give public honor and obedience to Christ. . . . The faithful, moreover, by meditating upon these truths, will gain much strength and courage, enabling them to form their lives after the Christian ideal. (32–33)

The pope, attempting to counter a society that had grown increasingly atheistic, was hoping the Church would emerge triumphant against the forces of a secular culture.

It has now been nearly a century since this solemnity was instituted and the question looms: What meaning does this solemnity have for us today? After all, kings aren't individuals to which we readily relate. While they may be respected or admired, kings remain remote and inaccessible. Say the word *king* and what comes to mind? Pomp and power, crowns and jewels, decorated robes and royal banquets typically paint our images of kings and kingdoms.

But Jesus offers a different vision of kingship. Each year on this solemnity, the Scriptures portray varied aspects of the kingship of Christ. They help us to see that Christ's kingship is not about power and majesty but about love. Christ's Kingdom is one where the lost are welcomed home and where the poor are raised up. The Scriptures remind us that rather than ruling with triumph from a throne, Christ ruled with humility from a cross. As Pope Francis said in 2017, when he inaugurated the World Day of the Poor,

The kingship of Christ is most evident on Golgotha, when the Innocent One, nailed to the cross, poor, naked and stripped of everything, incarnates and reveals the fullness of God's love. Jesus' complete abandonment to the Father expresses his utter poverty and reveals the power of the Love that awakens him to new life on the day of the Resurrection.

The World Day of the Poor was established by Pope Francis as an annual event that takes place on the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, one week before the Solemnity of



The kingship of Christ is ultimately a kinship, a culture where service reigns and humility rules.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. The pope created the World Day of the Poor “so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need.” By placing the World Day of the Poor a week apart from the Solemnity of Christ the King, the pope reminds us that real power comes from poverty. Only by an encounter with the poor, solidarity with the poor, and a way of life that shares generously with the poor do we understand and share in Christ's kingship.

The kingship of Christ is ultimately a kinship, a culture where service reigns and humility rules, a community where all are welcomed and where the only command is to love. May thy kingdom come.

Text by Kathy Kuczka, author of *Connecting the Liturgy with Our Lives: Print and Digital Resources for Faith Formation* (LTP, 2019). Photo © John Zich.  
© 2019 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 3949 South Racine, Avenue, Chicago, IL 60609; 800-933-1800; www.LTP.org.  
*Pastoral Liturgy*® magazine, September/October 2019, www.PastoralLiturgy.org.

*This page may be reproduced for personal or parish use. The copyright notice must appear with the text.  
It also may be downloaded at <http://pastoralliturgy.org/resources/ChristsKingship.pdf>.*