

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

November 22, 2020.

For the Kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

When discussing prayer with His disciples, Our Lord said, "***This is how you are to pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Subject us not to the trial but deliver us from the evil one'***" (Matthew 6:9-13). A similar version is found in Luke 11:2-4. Both versions do not include the ending sentence, "For the" This phrase is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts, and the early English versions, the KJV, and the NKJV, but not in most modern versions. Catholics do say it in the liturgy every mass. This final doxology of the Lord's Prayer is believed being put into the margin next to the Lord's Prayer in *Matthew* by one of the inscribers of the Middle Ages. In the days before the printing press, the monks spent long days meticulously reproducing the texts set before them and they prayed over what they were writing. The monk who wrote the doxology wanted to place a prayer next to what he was copying. He wanted the world to know that **God was the one and only king, the supreme king**. He wanted the world to know that **Jesus Christ had come to establish the Kingdom of God in this world, a kingdom of charity, a kingdom of love, a kingdom whose least members would be valued and cared for: The Kingdom of God on earth, the Church.**

The Church is not just a humanitarian organization. Humanitarians are concerned with the good of their fellow men. This is wonderful. But what we do in the Church is far more than humanitarian. **The Church is the Body of Christ on earth. It serves Christ and be Christ in every area of its life.** We seek the very presence of the Lord in those who are hurting. When He tells the sheep that they will be rewarded or the goats that they will be condemned (Matthew 25:32-46), the Lord does not just say that those who are suffering are important to Him. No, He identifies Himself with them. He says, "***For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. ... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.***"

Charity is not just something we do. It is our awareness of the presence of Jesus Christ in those with profound needs. We are Christians, servants of the One who identifies Himself with the marginalized. So, we must respond with what we have received from the Lord. We have received mercy, reconciliation and acceptance as sons and daughters of God. It is a challenge for us to live out the gratitude we owe God. **We demonstrate our gratitude in the way in which we treat those who are abandoned in the world today.** What is often called the preferential option for the poor is something we undertake not out of a sense of duty, but out of a sense of gratitude for the extraordinary gift of God's love. **Love is an amazing gift: we'll receive it only by giving it away.** We receive God's love by sharing his love with others, particularly with those whom Jesus Christ has said He is present in a special way. **Martin of Tours** was born in modern-day Hungary, just after Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire in the fourth century A.D. At fifteen he was required to join the cavalry of the Roman military. **As a young soldier in Amiens, he encountered a cold, unclothed beggar and gave him half his cloak, cutting it with his sword. That night he received a vision from Christ who made it clear that Martin had clothed him.** Martin was not even baptized yet but preparing for it. Eventually, he left the military and studied under Hilary of Poitiers, then founded a monastery for Benedictines.

This Sunday is also ominously referred to as the last Sunday in Ordinary time, and not just because next Sunday a new liturgical year beginning with Advent. It reminds us that one

day will be the last day of history: the day when Christ, Our King, returns in glory. In the first reading Ezekiel has just criticized the kings of Israel for not being good “shepherds” to Israel, their flock (Ezekiel 34:1–10) and tells Israel that the Lord himself will shepherd them. This **shepherd will rescue the sheep no matter how much they’ve strayed or been scattered.** He will make sure they have the pasture and the rest they need, and will keep them together and take care of the sick and injured. In the second reading (1 Corinthians 15:20-25,28), St. Paul says, “**God may be all in all,**” outlining the process that began with Christ’s Resurrection from the dead and continues until the end of time when he reigns forever. Christ’s Resurrection was just the beginning. Adam’s Fall condemned us all to death; **Christ’s resurrection brings life back to us again.** This won’t happen until he returns in glory. In the Gospel (Matthew 25:31-46), we hear, in Our Lord’s words, what the Last Judgment will be like: at the end of time everyone, living or dead, will stand before the Judge and be evaluated on their charity. The Golden Rule, “**do unto others as you would have them do unto you,**” receives an added incentive: what we do unto others we are also doing to the Lord himself. We may not feel loving or feel the love, but we continue to try based on a deeper spiritual conviction that it is the right thing to do and a way of loving Our Lord.

There are many Christians willing to be friends with Jesus in good times, but there are very few Christians that are real friends of Jesus in bad times especially in embracing the cross. Of course, it is never easy to be a friend of the cross, but who wants to be a fair-weather fan of Jesus and his Gospel? Our Christian lives are a constant battle. We should never forget that. We are all tempted to escape from the reality of our situation from time to time. Nevertheless, whoever perseveres until the end will be saved and have a fruitful life. As is well said by **St. Pius of Pietrelcina**: “**Beneath the cross, one learns to love**”. We can’t expect to have a glorious eternity full of celebration and joy if we don’t shed some blood, sweat, and tears here on earth for the sake of Christ and the good of our brothers and sisters. If we sow the good seeds of perseverance, integrity, love and act uprightly, we will certainly reap good fruits. As **St. Clare of Assisi** says: “**Our labour here is brief, but the reward is eternal.**” The Kingdom is not just something that will come at the end of time. **Charity and justice are the way we can help Christ’s Kingdom to spread. His Kingdom is a conquest of hearts, starting with ours.** We should, with our charity, help conquer the hearts of the whole world.

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