

Feast of Christ the King/XIX Trinity 2025

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

Colossians 1.12-20 St. John 18.33-37



“Praise to the Lord the Almighty, the King of creation”...the compelling words of our opening hymn set the stage for our celebration of the Feast of Christ the King. Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925. He wrote a letter in which he expressed hope Christians everywhere would be inspired “to give Jesus Christ lordship over every aspect of their lives.” His heartfelt prayer was “the Faithful would gain strength and courage from the celebration of the feast, as we are reminded that Christ must reign in our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies.”

Today our celebration of Christ the King is enhanced by the baptism of Christine Li. She has begun her journey in the Church, the Body of Christ, a journey that will by the grace of God ultimately lead her into His Kingdom in heaven. We heard Mark’s Gospel in which Jesus said God’s Kingdom belongs to children like Christine and we must receive his Kingdom like little children.

We prayed in the powerful words of the Baptismal Liturgy, that Christine signed with the Sign of the Cross, will always confess Christ and faithfully fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil. At her confirmation by the Bishop she will renew her Baptismal vows, and we will ask God to increase his grace in her so she may go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service.

Throughout the Bible God is portrayed as King. About 1100 years before the birth of Christ, God’s people came to the prophet Samuel and asked him to give them a human king...one they could see and hear. Samuel told them they already had a king; God was their King, and he was taking care of them. That wasn’t good enough for them. They said to Samuel, *“Give us a king”*. God told Samuel to give the people what they wanted. God said to Samuel, *“They aren’t rejecting you; they are rejecting me.”*

Samuel told God’s people what they could expect from their human king:

- *Your sons will be drafted and sent off to war where they will be killed; he will also make your sons work in the fields.*

- *Your daughters will have to clean the king's house and make it smell nice for him.*
- *He will take your land, your servants, your best crops; he will even make you his slaves.*
- *He will tax you unfairly and when you complain about how badly he treats you he won't listen to you.*

In last week's Gospel from Matthew, Jesus asks the religious teachers what they thought about the Messiah and whose descendant he was. They answered he would be a descendant of the great King David. Jesus asked them if that is true, how could (David) in Psalm 110 be inspired to call his descendant "Lord". Jesus, who is David's descendant is called "Lord" because he is greater than King David and he is the Second Person of the Trinity...Jesus is God!

We call Jesus our Lord and King...and he is. He is fully God and fully man, but he is not like any human king. King Jesus always does what is best for us. Jesus is Lord and King over the universe God has created. He is Lord and King over all human monarchs, presidents, prime ministers and governors. He is Lord and King over all bishops, priests and deacons. He is Lord and King over His Church on Earth.

We don't have to be afraid to call Jesus Lord and King. He is *THE LORD* who always shows love and compassion for us, the kind of love and compassion we must share. He is *THE KING* who came to us first as the little baby in the manger at Bethlehem, and then spent his entire life on Earth serving others.

Jesus is the kind of King who is also the Good Shepherd who watches out for his sheep, and goes looking for them when they get lost and bring them home. Jesus is God's Son who sets us free from sin and death and gives us true and everlasting peace and the hope we will share in his Kingdom in Heaven.

Today we celebrate with great happiness the Feast of Christ the King and Christine's new birthday as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. And we declare without reservation God has given us a King... and his Name is Jesus!

