Christ the King

A Kingship that Bears Witness to the Truth

Each year at the conclusion of the liturgical year, we fittingly celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. As the Apostle St. Paul teaches us, "In [Jesus Christ] everything in heaven and earth was created… and continues in being" (Col 1:16-17). He is the 'Alpha and Omega', the 'Beginning and End', the 'Way, Truth, and Life'. Indeed, Christ promises to His faithful friends the gift of salvation, the pledge of everlasting life through His Resurrection. Therefore, faithfulness to Christ, our King, opens the door to our eternal happiness.

Origin of the Feast: In 1925, Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in the encyclical *Quas Primas* (from Latin, "In the First") to respond to secularism—the adoration of 'idols' of the earthly world, such as money and fame, above God. Pope Pius XI recognized that secularism would breed hostility against the Church. In fact, during the 20th century, governments in Mexico, Russia, and Europe, infiltrated by secularism, threatened not only the Catholic Church but also civilization itself. *Quas Primas* gave Catholics the hope that while governments may crumble, Christ's Kingdom, unlike the kingdoms of this world, would last forever.

FOR THIS I WAS BORN, AND FOR THIS I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD, TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.

JOHN 18:37

Christ's Kingship: Although *Quas Primas* was written almost 90 years ago, it continues to ring true today. For instance, secularism continues to separate people from God, as evidenced by the rejection of Church teachings and the denial of God Himself. In addition, recent Pew Research Center data shows the worldwide increase of religious hostilities. Now more than ever, we must celebrate that Jesus Christ is King of the Universe, including in the following ways:

- **In Christ, we must preserve our fundamental rights.** Jesus Christ reveals the fulfillment of the truths of creation found in the book of Genesis: "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31). Therefore, "made in [His] image and likeness," each of us possesses an immeasurable goodness (Gen 1:26). And, this goodness from Christ, given to the heart of man, calls us to fight for what is justly ours: the right to life, freedom of conscience and religious freedom.

- **In Christ, we must evangelize in love.** Christ, both meek and humble of heart, is the perfect servant of God: Through His teaching and His life, Jesus intended to confirm, not to coerce, others in faith (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 11). Through our daily action, let us follow Christ's loving example of showing the truth to others.

- **In Christ, we must proclaim the truth.** Christ's Kingship "bear[s] witness to the truth" (John 18:37). In bearing this witness, Christ acknowledges government authority, "rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21). Nonetheless, we are asked to speak out "against governing powers which oppose the holy will of God" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 11).

Bearing witness to the truth in this age can be difficult. But Christ has shown us that 'kingship' must always be at the service of the good of mankind. Therefore, with His grace and in hope of His gift of salvation, let us bear witness to the truth, even when it is unpopular or costly to do so. In this way, we become faithful servants of Christ, preparing the way for His Kingdom, both on earth and in heaven.

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