

OUT OF THE UPPER ROOM CHRIST THE KING



Solemnity of Christ the King November 26

Well friends, we have (almost) made it to the end of another liturgical year. **On Sunday we celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe— more commonly known as Christ the King Sunday.** This marks the last Sunday before we start a new liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent. Our Gospels will no longer mostly come from Matthew— Mark's Gospel will dominate this year's cycle of readings. Over the next few weeks we will talk more about Advent-y things, today though, we are focusing on Christ the King.

When it comes to Solemnities in the church, this particular one is fairly new. Established in 1925 by Pope Pius XI with his encyclical *Quas primas* (In the First), it is not even a century old (nearly though- mark your calendars two years from now!). To understand why Pope Pius XI established this solemnity it is helpful to know what was going on globally at that time.

The world was recently out of the Great War (1914-1918) and trying to make sense of what happened and rebuild. There were different ideas beginning to gain traction (fascism, National Socialism, communism) and the world was becoming increasingly secular and atheistic. People were increasingly becoming individualistic in their views of the world. Military regimes in some parts of Europe, Russia, and Mexico were threatening the Catholic Church and her faithful as well as society itself. As governments fell apart, Pope Pius XI's encyclical gave hope and assurance that Christ, the King of the Universe would reign forever.

It was affirmed at the Council of Nicaea (325) the full divinity of Jesus Christ as God the Son, one in being with God the Father, their pronouncement became the Nicene Creed. In 1925, the Church was celebrating a



jubilee year in honour of the 1600th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. Throughout the jubilee year Pope Pius XI emphasized the kingship of Jesus, particularly “His kingdom will have no end” and how that was celebrated throughout the church year with the Feasts of the Annunciation, Epiphany, Transfiguration, and Ascension.

The date on which we celebrate it is important (placed at its current date by Pope Paul VI in 1969) on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, just before the First Sunday of Advent when we prepare to celebrate Christ’s birth and his second coming. The Solemnity of Christ the King celebrates and emphasizes the kingship of Christ while

connecting to his second advent (coming) to judge the world.

When we look at 1920s Europe (and North America) and all that was going on culturally and politically and look at our 2020s world we see many similarities. For Christians, then and now, our faith is quite often not the norm in public life. Our values and beliefs can be thought as odd or old fashioned so we could have a tendency to compartmentalize our lives. In our private lives we love Jesus, but maybe would be slow to acknowledge Christ at work or in our social lives. This Solemnity is as important today as it was when it was first established, the need to place Jesus above all else and praise him as King is still what we are striving to do, both privately and publicly. In celebrating the Solemnity of Christ the King, we are declaring to the world and ourselves the kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

“He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, ‘as instruments of justice unto God.’”
-Quas primas, 33



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holyspiritsaskatoon.ca

Holy Spirit Parish | 114 Kingsmere Place, Saskatoon, S7J 3V7 Canada

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