

- As humans created in God’s image and likeness, we are built and created for love. Man has a very natural and very great capacity for charity.
  - Yet, very sadly, our society and world are becoming more and more fractured, with the divisions between people becoming all the more pronounced and hostile. Charity is a virtue seemingly in danger of becoming extinct.
  - We see this so clearly now, in this time before the election, in which partisan political positions make it difficult for some to be civil with people of opposing views, and even seek to “cancel” their voice and influence.
  - Just in the past two weeks I’ve received harassing and threatening phone calls and letters because we had a pro-life banner outside our church. And 2 years ago, our parish and every other Catholic institution in this city displaying the same banner had their banners stolen.
  - And all of this because we believe that killing unborn children is wrong. None of this should surprise us, though. If someone thinks killing an unborn child is okay, why wouldn’t they resort to harassment, intimidation, and theft as well?
  - What we must do, though, is keep our hearts open in love, because the hatefulness we suffer at the hands of those who do not like the Church’s moral teachings is of the devil.
  - The devil wants us to hate each other, to demonize each other – and we must resist those feelings and temptations if we wish to live within the Realm of Christ our King!
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- As many of you know, while the Feast of Christ the King isn’t celebrated in the new calendar until the last Sunday before Advent, in the old calendar of the Latin Mass it’s actually celebrated on the last Sunday of October: today!
  - Seeing the rise of atheistic communism and secularism as a result of people denying the sovereignty of Christ, Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 to remind people of the absolute authority of Christ and His Church, and renew their loyalty to our sovereign Lord.
  - What I love about this Feast is that it reminds us so clearly that Jesus Christ – blessed be His holy name – has dominion over all things!
  - In a world sated with corrupt and power-hungry people, this feast gives us hope that no matter what evil forces may be at work in our world, all will one day answer to Christ, for Christ the King is indeed the ruler of all things.
  - Our duty as His loyal subjects in this world is to endeavor to align our personal wills with the will of our divine King – to live as Christ our King would have us live – indeed, to be other Christs out in the world so that we might help others conform their lives to His.
  - Moreover, like Christ, we must learn to look with love on those who do not know Him, or who have turned away from Him. We must learn to love with a special tenderness those who hate God and who hate us for loving God.
  - This past week while traveling through Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, I heard the story of a courageous nun named Iva Vucic, who was the Superior of a large community of Franciscan sisters in the Diocese of Mostar during World War II.
  - Toward the end of the war, the Communists knew they had to crush any religious influences amongst the staunchly Catholic Croatians if they were going to wield absolute control.

- So, they began targeting Catholic priests and religious for intimidation, and even worse. In the year 1945 alone, more than 60 Franciscan priests were killed by Communists in the Diocese of Mostar.
- As they knew would happen, Communist thugs eventually showed up at the door of the Franciscan Sisters' mother house. Frightened yet faithful, Sr. Iva ran to the gate of the mother house, threw open the doors, and warmly welcomed the Communists.
- She invited them to rest in the cool shade of the monastery courtyard, allowed them to wash up, and gave them plenty of food and drink. Eyewitnesses say that her hospitality was not at all feigned, but truly gracious and sincere.
- Shocked and overwhelmed at her hospitality, the Communists left the Franciscan sisters in peace. That's the power of charity: just a brief experience with Sr. Iva's genuine Christian charity made those hardened men rethink the evil they were about to commit.
- Sadly, 45 years later at the beginning of the Bosnian War of the 1990's, that same Franciscan mother house was the very first target of Communist Serbs. Yet evil didn't triumph for long.
- While the original mother house was destroyed by bombs and grenades, none of the sisters were killed. And the Marian grotto that sits just a few yards from the motherhouse was left complexly untouched.
- Since then, a new, very beautiful mother house has been built in its place, and the community is absolutely thriving with vocations.
- What we learn from Sr. Iva and those hearty Franciscan sisters is that we don't have to respond in kind when we are subjected to evil. We do not have to take an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth. We can return a blessing for a curse as Christ calls us to do!
- And even if it seems that evil gains an upper hand, if we guard our hearts and try to show even our enemies the love of Christ, our Lord will bring good out of the evil and bless us.
- You see, Christ's kingship is a spiritual sovereignty; it's not a coercive sovereignty.
- While we know by faith that Jesus is Lord over all creation, He did not come to rule on earth, but rather to establish the Kingdom of God within the hearts of all men so that we might one day enter the Heavenly Kingdom.
- All-powerful though He is, Jesus is still meek and humble of heart. To think: our Lord allowed Himself to be betrayed by Judas, castigated by hypocritical Pharisees, tortured by the Romans, mocked by Herod, and judged by a weak man like Pilate.
- And even once He was crucified, Jesus could have come down from there and crushed His enemies. Yet a show of dominance – while perhaps garnering respect – doesn't cultivate love. But humility does! And so Christ suffered in silence, saying very little from the Cross and dying like a common criminal.
- So, as we move into this time of year in which the death and judgment loom large in our hearts and minds, Holy Mother Church calls us to draw closer to this humble King now so that He might truly rule our hearts – and make them like His own.
- Brothers and sisters, our world is so very divided right now. And we who love Christ and seek to live by His laws will be hated and persecuted. But do not fear. It is a mighty yet humble king that we serve. Gentle as He is, His kingdom will have no end.
- Let us live lives pleasing to our King by learning to love everyone, especially those who hate us, so that we will be well prepared to meet Christ our King when He comes again.