

- As we come to the end of a liturgical year, Holy Mother Church celebrates the magnificent Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe.
- This feast is meant to help us better appreciate God's sovereignty and omnipotence, while also inducing us to greater submission to our Lord, and a greater faith in His power.
- For the past several weeks, our readings at Mass have turned our attention toward death, judgment, Heaven, and hell. We've been confronted with the reality of our own mortality, of the fact that one day, all of us will die and have to face our Lord.
- Today's feast reinforces this stark reality of our own particular judgment, but it also reminds us of Christ's eventual return to earth in majesty and the final judgment on all mankind, enflaming our faith in the Lord's Kingdom that is yet to come.
- Ever since the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, Western society has witnessed a gradual divorce between faith and reason, resulting in a loss of belief in and appreciation of the spiritual and non-material world by so many people. There's been a terrible loss of faith.
- This is because the Enlightenment advocated reason, completely separated from faith, as the primary source of intellectual authority.
- And thus the intelligentsia of the Enlightenment period turned its back wholesale on the immaterial world, deciding instead that only that which is material was worth believing in.
- Yet, every Sunday at Mass we profess our faith in God with the *Creed*, acknowledging Him as the Maker of all that is, visible and invisible. Very clearly, our Catholic faith professes belief in and relies upon both visible and invisible realities.
- Understanding fallen mankind's weakness of faith and need for concrete, visible realities, the Church makes the invisible realities of our faith visible through signs and symbols woven into our art, architecture, and most especially the liturgy itself.
- So, part of the maturation process as a Catholic is learning to look beyond these signs and symbols to see and believe in these invisible realities.
- So well did our Lord understand fallen mankind's need for material realities that He became man in the Incarnation, as St. Paul says: "the image of the invisible God."
- But even though Jesus became man, in His humility He kept His divinity hidden for most of His life on earth. Of course we got glimpses of His divinity at His baptism, at His transfiguration, and through His miracles.
- Our Lord gave mankind these glimpses of His divinity in order to *elicit faith* and to build a body of believers who would become the nucleus of the Church that would continue His work after His ascension into Heaven.
- Now, 2000 years later, today's feast, more than anything, calls us to greater faith in Christ.
- In looking at today's Gospel, we must understand that never was Jesus' divinity more hidden yet more visible to the eyes of faith than in His suffering and death. At the same time, never was Jesus more "kingly" than in His suffering and death.
- So, as we consider today's feast of Christ the King and our Gospel passage, we must strive to look beyond the visible reality of Calvary to see Jesus as king.
- His crown is a crown of thorns, but no less of a crown. His throne from which He reigns is a cross, but it is no less a throne. Rather than fine silk or linen, He is appareled with bloody wounds, but they are regal vesture nonetheless.

- There is a sign above His head that reads “Jesus, King of the Jews”, and yet there is nothing about Him that would suggest that He is a king. But we know by faith that “in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible.”
- St. Paul reminds us today that Jesus “is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” And we must have faith in Jesus’ power and authority, especially when they are challenged.
- To this point, 100 years ago, seeing the rise of atheistic communism and secularism as a result of people denying the sovereignty of Christ, Pope Pius XI instituted today’s feast of Christ the King in 1925 to remind people of the absolute authority of Christ and His Church.
- The whole point of today’s feast is to draw us closer in faith to Christ so that we might allow Him truly to rule our hearts. In our faith, we must entrust ourselves to Christ the King as His loyal subjects so that He might save us from our sins.
- Being the gentle and humble king that He is, Jesus invites us to believe in Him, take joy in Him, to love Him, to honor Him, to serve Him, and to obey Him.
- Christ’s kingship is a spiritual sovereignty, not a coercive sovereignty: a sovereignty that’s a gentle invitation to holiness – an invitation that must be accepted if we hope to go to Heaven.
- While we know by faith that Christ is King of the Universe, Lord over all things – visible and invisible – 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 share in eternal life.
- But in order for this to happen, we must have faith enough to look beyond that which is visible and material to see the invisible realities our Catholic faith professes, especially with regard to today’s Gospel, which presents us with a great paradox.
- By all appearances the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords is defeated upon Calvary, but it is precisely His death that gives us life! And at times, when our prayers aren’t answered as we want or suffering enters our lives, we can be tempted to doubt Christ’s power.
- Yet, we cannot be duped like Pilate, the Pharisees, the centurions and the mocking crowds that surround Christ on the cross and believe Him to be defeated. Through His death and resurrection, Christ teaches us that in order to save our lives, we must first lose them!
- This means we must die to self with a willingness to suffer, humbly submitting to His will, even when He doesn’t answer our prayers as we wish.
- So often in a life of faith, we come upon those moments when we pray for something that seems so good and full of common sense, and yet Christ doesn’t answer our prayer as we think He should. When that happens, we must double down on our faith in Him.
- And like the good thief, we must look with faith beyond the crucifixion scenes of our life, and see Christ reigning in majesty from the cross, trusting that there’s a resurrection ahead.
- And so, my friends, let us pay homage to Christ our King, by having absolute faith in His power, most especially in those difficult moments when things aren’t going our way.
- No matter what is happening in your life right now, Christ is still King!
- With confident faith, let us lay down our lives and die to self by our willingness to suffer and by ridding our hearts of all that keeps us from serving Him as we should.
- And as we surrender all to Him in faith, my friends, let us know that someday, like Dismas the Good Thief, we will be with Christ forever in Paradise.