The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (B)

Gospel text (*Jn* 18:33b-37): Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

"I am a king... Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice"

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Today Jesus Christ is presented to us as the King of the Universe. My attention has always been drawn by the emphasis the Bible attributes to the word “King” when applied to our Lord. “The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty” we sing in Psalm 93. “I am a king” (Jn 18:37), we have heard from Jesus' very lips. “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Lk 19:38), people shouted when He was entering Jerusalem.

The word “King”, applied to God and to Jesus Christ, does not certainly have the inferred meaning we give to it when speaking of the conventional monarchy, as we know it. Yet, in the popular language the word “king” does have a certain affinity with the Biblical language. For instance, when a mother is taking care of her baby and tells him: —You are the king of our home. What is she implying? Just a very simple thing: that her little baby is her number one priority and means everything to her. And when teen-agers claim that so and so is the king of Rock, they actually mean there is no other one like him; similarly, as when they refer to the basketball king. Enter a teen-ager’s room and you will probably see on his walls who are really his “kings”. I believe these popular expressions very much resemble what we mean when we acclaim God as our King and help us to understand Jesus' assertion about his kingdom: “My kingship is not from here” (Jn 18:36).

For us Christians our King is our Lord, that is, the centre where the deepest feelings of our lives are going

to. When in the Lord's Prayer we say “Your kingdom come”, we mean we would like to see that more and more people could find the source of their happiness in God, while following the path He shows us, which is the path of the beatitudes. Let us therefore ask it with all our heart, for “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is our life and our kingdom” (St. Ambrose).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “If we are trying to have Christ as our king, we must be consistent. We must start by giving him our heart. Not to do that and still talk about the kingdom of Christ would be completely hollow. There would be no real Christian substance in our behavior.” (Saint Josemaría)

- “Choosing Christ does not guarantee success according to the world's criteria but assures the peace and joy that he alone can give us.” (Benedict XVI)

- “... In situations that require witness to the faith, the Christian must profess it without equivocation, after the example of St. Paul before his judges. We must keep ‘a clear conscience toward God and toward men’ (Acts 24:16).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2471)