CHRIST THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Sunday, November 22, 2026 – Year A

Readings: Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17; 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28; Matthew 25:31–46






A King Unlike Any Other King

Almost 300 years ago, on March 23, 1743, Handel's magnificent *Messiah* was performed in London. According to a famous tradition, King George II of England was present at a performance of this great masterpiece. When the choir began singing the glorious *Hallelujah Chorus*, proclaiming: **"King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!"** the king suddenly stood up. And when the king stood, everyone else stood as well! Even today, audiences in many parts of the world continue this beautiful tradition of standing during the *Hallelujah Chorus*. Whether or not every detail of this story is historically certain, its message is deeply meaningful. **An earthly king stood to honor the King of the Universe.** But here is something even more extraordinary.

In today's Gospel, we discover that **the King of the Universe bends down to meet the poorest and the weakest among us.**

What an amazing King we have!

1. A King Who Wears a Crown of Thorns

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. This feast was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925, through his encyclical *Quas Primas*. The world had just experienced the terrible destruction of the First World War. Nationalism was growing, political power was becoming increasingly dangerous, and many people were pushing God out of their lives.

Pope Pius XI wanted to remind the world that **true peace begins when Christ reigns in the human heart.** One hundred years later, our world has changed dramatically. We can send spacecraft to distant planets, but sometimes we cannot cross the street to make peace with our neighbors. We have artificial intelligence that becomes smarter every day, but our hearts do not always become kinder.

We have smartphones that connect us with people around the world, yet sometimes members of the same family sit together at dinner without speaking to one another. How much our world still needs Christ the King!

But Jesus is unlike any earthly king. **His crown is made of thorns. His throne is the Cross. His power is forgiveness. And His victory comes through love and self-sacrifice.**

2. A King Who Searches for His Lost Sheep

In today's first reading, the prophet Ezekiel presents a beautiful image of God as the Good Shepherd. God says: "I myself will search for my sheep. I will bring back the lost, bind up the injured, and strengthen the weak." What a wonderful image of a king! He does not sit comfortably in His palace, waiting for people to come to Him. Instead, He goes out to search for those who are lost. And this is also the mission of the Church. The Church must not simply take care of those who already come to Mass. We must reach out to those who have stopped coming, those who have lost hope, those who are suffering, and even those who have been hurt by people within the Church itself.

The Church is not a club for perfect people. It is a home for those who need God's mercy. And that includes every one of us.

3. Jesus Has Already Given Us the Questions for Our Final Examination!

Today is the last Sunday of the liturgical year. Next Sunday, we begin Advent. We might say that today is something like the final examination of our Christian life! But here is the good news. Jesus is a very unusual teacher.

He has already given us all the questions for the final examination! And there are only six questions.

1. *When I was hungry, did you give me food?*
2. *When I was thirsty, did you give me something to drink?*
3. *When I was a stranger, did you welcome me?*
4. *When I had no clothes, did you clothe me?*
5. *When I was sick, did you visit me?*
6. *When I was in prison, did you come to see me?*

That's it! Only six questions!

We already know the questions. We have our whole lifetime to prepare. And we are even allowed to help one another with the answers!

Wouldn't it be a terrible shame if we still failed the examination?

But there is something very serious in today's Gospel.

Notice that Jesus does not condemn the people on His left because they committed murder, robbed a bank, or committed some terrible crime.

He condemns them because **they failed to do the good, they could have done.**

This is what the Church calls the ***sin of omission***.

Sometimes, the greatest problem in our world is not only the evil done by bad people. **It is also the indifference of good people.** We may not be able to help everyone. But everyone can help someone. And sometimes, one small act of kindness can change another person's entire life.

4. The Homeless Jesus: A Remarkable Sculpture

Let me share with you a remarkable story. In 2013, a Canadian artist named *Timothy Schmalz* created a powerful sculpture called *Homeless Jesus*. Copies of this sculpture can now be found in different parts of the world, including the Vatican. At first glance, it looks like an ordinary homeless person sleeping on a park bench. His body is covered with a blanket. His face is completely hidden. You cannot tell who he is. But when you come closer, you notice something extraordinary. His bare feet are sticking out from beneath the blanket. And on those feet, you can see the wounds of the nails. Suddenly, you realize: **The homeless man sleeping on that bench is Jesus Himself!** What a powerful message!

The sculpture reminds us of the words of today's Gospel: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Perhaps the artist deliberately hid the face of Jesus so that we might learn to recognize His face in the people around us. Jesus may be present in the street cleaner we pass every morning. In the construction worker who works under the burning sun. In the migrant worker far away from home. In the prisoner whom society has forgotten. In an elderly person who lives alone. Or even in a family member with whom we have stopped speaking.

God does not hide Himself because He does not want to be found. He hides Himself among the poor and the suffering so that we may learn how to love.

The next time we meet someone in need, perhaps we should ask ourselves: "What if this person were Jesus?" Because according to today's Gospel, in a very real sense, He is.

5. A King Who Has Conquered Death

In the second reading, Saint Paul gives us a wonderful message of hope. Christ has risen from the dead! And the last enemy to be destroyed is death itself. This is especially meaningful during November, when we remember and pray for our beloved departed. Every earthly king eventually dies. His power comes to an end. But Jesus is different. Through His death and

Resurrection, He has conquered death and opened for us the way to eternal life. That means our lives have an eternal meaning. Every act of love matters. Every act of kindness matters. Every sacrifice made for another person matters.

The kindness that nobody remembers, God remembers.

The tears that nobody sees, God sees.

The sacrifices for which nobody thanks us, God knows.

In the eyes of God, no act of love is too small, and no act of goodness is ever wasted.

6. Who Is Sitting on the Throne of Your Heart?

Let me conclude with one simple question. **Who is sitting on the throne of your heart?** Is it money? Is it power? Is it pride? Is it ambition? Is it anger or resentment that we refuse to let go? Or is it ourselves? Today, we celebrate Jesus Christ as King of the Universe. But it is not enough to proclaim that Jesus is the King of heaven and earth. We must also invite Him to become **the King of our hearts.** And one day, when our earthly journey comes to an end, we shall stand before Christ our King. I do not believe that He will be most interested in asking us: "How important were you?" "How much money did you earn?" "How many people admired you?" Instead, today's Gospel invites us to reflect on a much more important question:

"Whose life became better because you lived in this world?"

What a beautiful question to carry in our hearts! And what a wonderful way to prepare for eternity! May we live each day with kindness, mercy, forgiveness, and love. So that when we finally meet Christ our King, we may hear the most beautiful words of all: **"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."** Amen.

May God bless you all, and have a wonderful Sunday!

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