

Patriarchal Homily:

Beloved children in Christ,

Today the Holy Church summons us to contemplate the greatest mystery of our faith: **the reign of Christ**, not as the kingdoms of the world that die with the centuries, but as the eternal Kingdom that is born of love and culminates in the Cross.

This Sunday, the Word reveals to us **what it means that Christ is King**. Not a distant king, not a king of human power, but **the crucified King**, the Shepherd who guides, the Messiah who saves, and the Lord who opens Paradise with his own blood.



In the first reading, Israel gathers to anoint David as king. And in doing so they confess something profound: "We are of your own blood. You have led us. You will shepherd us."

My children, what Israel recognizes in David is a **prefiguration of the mystery of Christ**, the true King, the definitive Shepherd, the one who does not govern by ambition but by **divine election**.

David receives an earthly kingdom; Christ receives an eternal Kingdom, a Kingdom that is not sustained by the sword, but by sacrifice. A Kingdom that is not defended with armies, but with the truth that liberates and the mercy that transforms.

The psalm joyfully proclaims: "Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord."

This joy is the joy of the pilgrim, of one who knows that his destination is not the earth, but Jerusalem, the city of the Great King.

The whole Church advances towards that holy city, and in her journey she blesses, prays, asks for peace, because where Christ reigns there is peace, and where Christ is King, there is fullness.

The Christian does not live by nostalgia, but by **hope**: hope in the Kingdom that is already approaching, hope in the heavenly Jerusalem where Christ fills everything.

In the letter to the Colossians,

St. Paul gives us one of the most sublime descriptions of the Lord:

Christ is the image of the invisible God. Christ is the Firstborn. Christ is the foundation of everything. Christ is the head of the Church. Christ is the fullness.

And in Him, God wanted to reconcile all things.

This word is a throne: ascend to it and look down from on high. Notice that the universe—visible and invisible—is not sustained by chance, but because **Christ sustains it**. Notice that history—with lights and shadows—is not directed to chaos, but to Christ.

Everything was created in Him, by Him, and for Him. And so was our life: we were made for His Kingdom, we were rescued for His light, we were forgiven for His glory.

The Gospel shows us the throne of Christ:

which is a cross.

In front of her, the world mocks:

"If you are a King, save yourself." The powerful despise him, the soldiers ridicule him, even a malefactor insults him.

But there, in the midst of the insult, the truth shines:

Christ is King because he does not save himself.

Christ is King because He saves others. Christ is King because He abides in love to the end. Christ is King because he conquers not by force, but by surrender.

And then the miracle occurs: a repentant thief, a broken and dying man, looks at the crucified one and discovers the King.

He says humbly, "Lord, when you come into your kingdom, remember me."

And Christ, from his wooden throne, hands him the crown: "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Children, listen to this word as if it were the first time:

the cross opens Paradise. The death of the King gives us life. The sacrifice of the Lamb opens the eternal gates.

Our hope is not an idea or an emotional comfort. Our hope is **Christ the King**, the crucified one who lives, the dead who rose again, the King who comes.

This world is tottering, but his Kingdom is not tottering. Human kingdoms pass away, but their Kingdom does not pass.

Our heart may waver, but His love never moves.

Therefore, as patriarch, I say to you:

Do not be afraid. Do not give up. Do not back down.

The King is with us in the tribulation. The King rules even when he seems hidden. The King opens paradise even from the cross. The King will come, and at his coming there will be peace, there will be light, there will be fullness.

Dear Children, Be sure in Christ. Build your life on Christ. Hope in Christ alone. For He is the beginning and the end, the root and the crown, the light that guides, the peace that saves, and the eternal King who reigns from the cross and will come in glory to lead us into His Kingdom.

Say in faith:

"Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord."

For the Lord is coming, and he is coming with **the kingdom, with peace, and with eternal life.**

Amen.