

During his long homily the preacher became so animated and excited that he began to make sweeping gestures - and accidentally knocked his sermon notes from the pulpit. After picking them up he fumbled through those papers to find the correct page, and asked, "Now, where was I?" A voice from the congregation responded, "Right near the end!"

Yes, we are right near the at the end - not of the homily, but of the liturgical year. And on this last Sunday of the liturgical year we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925 to respond to the growing secularization of the world after world war I. This feast reminds us that while governments and political parties come and go, Christ reigns as king forever.

In some countries including India, this feast is celebrated more solemnly lasting up to 5 hours, than what I have seen in this country. Usually, on this day a procession is taken out in the main streets of the city, singing, dancing, shouting slogans like "hail Christ the King. Long live Christ the King

For us and for those living in democratic nation the concept of king, kingdom may seem outdated and obsolete and may be even difficult to understand. But there are countries in the world still ruled by kings. Many Muslim countries are still ruled by kings. During the time of Jesus and even before, probably whole world was ruled by kings and queens, prince and princess. And no one can tell that democracy will be accepted by all the countries in the world in the future. So, kings and queens and kingdoms are going to stay. If we know little history then, we may be familiar that unlike the president or prime minister of a modern day independent democratic nation, the king inherited the power and authority from his ancestors. He was the supreme authority in his kingdom. And this power and authority was permanent or lifelong. Unlike the power and authority in democracy which keeps changing from party to party. And it is in this sense of supreme authority which is lasting or permanent, the title Christ the King rightly fits.

The title "Christ the King" deeply rooted in Scriptures both in old and New Testament. In most of the Messianic prophecies given in the Old Testament books of Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, Christ the Messiah is represented as a King.

Some examples in New Testament. During the Annunciation, recorded in Lk 13:2-33, we read: "*The Lord God will make him a King, as his ancestor David was, and He will be the King of the descendants of Jacob forever and His Kingdom will never end.*"

The Magi from the Far East came to Jerusalem and asked the question: (Mt. 2:2) “*Where is the baby born to be the King of the Jews? We saw his star... and we have come to worship him.*” And one of them offered gift of Gold fitting only for a king. In fact, the *Kingdom of God* is the center of Jesus’ teaching and the phrase “*Kingdom of God*” occurs in the Gospels 122 times, of which 90 instances are uses by Jesus.

There are plenty of texts proving the kingship of Jesus both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. It may take one full semester to study all of them.

The first reading, taken from the book of Daniel, speaks of the mysterious Son of Man (with whom Jesus would later identify himself), coming on the clouds, glorified by God and given dominion that will last forever. The permanency of his power and authority.

Today’s Responsorial Psalm (Ps 93), proclaims, “*The Lord is King,*” celebrating the God of Israel as King over all creation.

In the second reading, taken from the Book of Revelation, the risen Christ comes amid the clouds as the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last of all things.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus asserts before Pilate that he is a king and clarifies that his kingdom “*does not belong to this world.*” He rules as King by serving others rather than by dominating them; his authority is rooted in truth, not in physical force, and his Kingdom, the reign of God, is based on the Beatitudes.

There are plenty of texts proving the kingship of Jesus both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament of the Bible. (See the Exegesis).

So, how are we serve this king? First of all, we need to accept Christ the King as our Lord, King and Savior and surrender our lives to him by giving priority to his teaching in our daily choices, especially in moral decisions. In other words, Christ must be in full charge of our lives, and we must give him sovereign power over our bodies, our thoughts, our heart and our will.

The young men and women may like to serve this king by dedicating themselves in his army as priests and nuns. And we are urgently in need of such young men and women.