

Trinity XX

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[0 : 00] One of the things that turns people off to the church today is the mixture of religion and politics.

The church is often seen as just another institution vying for power. And sadly, that stereotype can be true, but it should not be.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. This feast was instituted in the early 20th century, so rather new, as atheistic regimes started persecuting Christians in places like Mexico, Russia, with the rise of the Bolsheviks, and various regions throughout Europe.

This feast emphasizes the point that no matter what countries do or leaders claim, Jesus is the ultimate, the only, the true king.

Here in our gospel text, we heard a pretty political statement. And it is our Lord who makes such proclamation.

[1 : 20] It follows the question posed by Pilate, who asked, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight. Pilate asked the question again, saying, are you a king then?

Our Lord does not say, well, let's get off the topic of politics. Instead, he says in verse 37, you say rightly that I am a king.

For this cause, I was born. And for this cause, I have come into the world. The church confesses this truth of Jesus' kingship, his lordship, every time we gather for mass.

We confess Jesus as the king in the daily offices of both morning and evening prayer. And in the apostles and the apostles and the apostles of Nicene creed, we confess, and the whole point of those creeds is that Jesus is Lord.

[2 : 32] But what does that mean? It means that above all emperors or rulers, Jesus is the true king and every single person will one day bow down to him in his presence.

But his kingdom is not red, white, and blue. It is a kingdom that has no borders, no fences. The only gate to this kingdom is Jesus himself.

And he welcomes all who profess him as Lord. In the words of our collect this morning, Jesus has been exalted over all worlds.

But here is the main point this morning. Unlike certain regimes and dictatorships, our Lord's kingdom is not a totalitarian reign.

It is not a kingdom ruled by brute force. It is not a kingdom that functions with savvy politicians and empty promises.

[3 : 42] It is not a kingdom that exalts the prominent or the rich. It is a kingdom that transcends the human craftiness, the human cunningness that belongs to the way of the prideful people.

It is a kingdom where humility and service are extolled. It is a kingdom where the God who created all things becomes the crucified victim for all people.

As he was motivated by love for all people. It is the allegiance of the baptized who now boldly confess Jesus as Lord.

And are willing to offer their own lives. And in many cases have offered their own lives. For the life of the world that is to come.

As Christians who confess our allegiance to King Jesus, we also recognize that right now we live in Babylon.

[4 : 57] We live in Babylon. And what I mean by that statement is that we are exiles. Not exiles from God. Exiles from the world. As St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2, verses 11 and 12.

He says we as baptized Christians are to live as foreigners. As strangers to this world. Because the kingdom of God is not of this world.

It's not about power. It's not about might. The kingdom of God is not drenched in the blood of revolution.

The kingdom of God is found in the blood of the cross. Whereby we have received our right to be called children of God.

By being baptized into Christ Jesus. And participating in his death, his burial, his resurrection and ascension. Therefore, we are not to seek our own will.

[6 : 05] Or our own dominion by force. Instead, we are to live as exiles. But openly confess our faith.

By heralding the good news. That the king of the world has come in the person of Jesus. We are to imitate the love of God found in Christ.

By life. A life of service. A life of humility. By a life of love. And in the midst of all the noise we hear in our culture.

May our confidence and may our faith never waver. As we live. As we proclaim. As we serve others. With our allegiance focused upon our king.

The king of kings. Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.