

Christ the King!

If you were asked to name some of the great kings in history, who would come to mind?

Julius Caesar was a king. He was involved with **Cleopatra** in Egypt. He was murdered by **Brutus** on the **Ides of March**. He died in **44 BC** at the age of **56**.

Henry VIII was a king. He was made king of **England** at the age of 17. He had 6 different **wives** and beheaded 2 of them. He died in the year **1547** at the age of **55**.

Louie the Great was a king. He was made king of **France** at the age of 19. He was executed along with his wife in the year **1793** at the age of **38**.

So these were some of the **great kings** in history. **Did you remember** these kings? **What else** can you tell me about **Julius Caesar, Henry VIII, or Louie the Great?**

I bet that you'd be hard pressed to tell me **anything else** about them?

Most people couldn't even come up with the correct century in which they lived ... let alone be able to say what **they stood for** or what **they accomplished as king!**

Well there's another King ... who also died young ... at the **age of 33**.

But this King then raised Himself from the dead ... ascended into Heaven ... and is now seated at the right hand of the Father ... with a **reign that will never end!**

His name is Jesus. He never got married and he never killed anyone, but like many kings before Him ... He was killed by the people.

Do you remember this King? **Of course you do!** **And today,** almost **2000 years** after his **death,** over **2 Billion people** still claim Him as their King!

They know a lot about Him, because they remind themselves of His life by gathering every 7 days and hearing about what He stood for and **all He accomplished!**

Yes, even though He's gone from our sight, **millions of people** hold onto his teachings and trust in His promises, and go right on serving Him ... and would even die for **the love of Him!**

Wow! What a **great King** He must be! **And indeed He is!**
Jesus is the King ... above every other King. **Jesus is ... the King of Kings!**

Now, how did Jesus become the King of so many people?

He was installed by God the Father ... at the request of the People!

Amazing as that sounds ... **here's how it happened.**

Around **1250 BC**, **Moses** led the Chosen People to freedom from **Egypt**. After wandering in the desert for 40 years, **Joshua** led them into the Promised Land. **Judges** were selected to guide the people through crisis situations. These **Judges** were not set up as permanent leaders or kings ...
because **God Himself** was to be their King.

But the **Jews** continued to complain that they wanted to have a human King rule over them ... just like all the **neighboring nations had**. **God** did not like this ... because this was a rejection ... of His Kingship.

But he granted their request for human kings, first **Saul, David, Solomon**, etc. The **greatest** of these was **David**. And **God** promised David he'd have a descendent, whose **kingdom** would last forever.

But this did not happen quickly! In fact, **1000 years** would go by before **God's promise** would be fulfilled. And **during this time**, after first being united under mighty King David, the **Jewish Kingdom** would eventually be split: with the **Northern Kingdom** being conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BC, and the **Southern Kingdom** being taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 587 BC

After that **the Jews** were governed by foreign Kings ...
Persian Kings, Greek kings & Roman Kings.

Finally God sent an angel to a young virgin in the town of Nazareth to ask her to be the mother of the Messiah and telling her that her Son would be the one to sit on the throne of David and that His Kingdom would be without end. **Mary** said **yes!**

And **nine months** later, Mary gave birth to Jesus, in the little town of **Bethlehem ...**
the very town in which King David had been born!

So in the end, how did **God** answer the people's rejection of His Divine Kingship?

With mercy and compassion, as **God** sent His only begotten Son to be their King. Now they had their human king ... but One who was both human and divine!

In Jesus ... God was once again ... the King of the Chosen People!

Unfortunately not many of them realized it.

In fact **many** called for His death ... because they didn't understand the nature of His Kingship ... you see His Kingdom was not here ... it was yet to come.

Recall how Jesus answered when Pontius Pilate asked Him
if He was **the King of the Jews**.

Jesus replied, “*My Kingdom does not belong to this world.*

If it did, 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 acknowledged, “*Then you are a King!”*

Yes indeed, **Jesus is a King** ... a very powerful King. Why just a few hours earlier, **Jesus** had been arrested by **Roman soldiers** in the **Garden of Gethsemane** and **when Peter** tried to defend Jesus, **he cut off a servant’s ear**. **Whereupon Jesus** said, “*Put your sword back into its sheath, Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than 12 legions of angels?”*

There are **6,000** angels in a **Legion**; which means that **Jesus** would have had **72,000 angels at his disposal** just for the asking. **Jesus is a powerful King!**

Pilate got it right **when he wrote Jesus’ accusation** on the placard over his head on the Cross to read, “*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”*

Today we celebrate Him as way more “*Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*”

You know, **all throughout history**, human kings always appointed various people to be their **messengers**.

What **an honor** it was to be a messenger for the king.

People were so happy just to have **the role of messenger** of the king!

Well, consider this, all of us gathered here, are **messengers of a King, Jesus Christ!**

Through the **gift of Baptism**, we get to live in **His palace**, which is the **Church**, the Kingdom of God on Earth. And **we have the privilege** of carrying His messages out to the world. **So we too, are messengers** of the King!

What kind of king is **Jesus**? He is a spiritual King, not a material king. He came to shepherd us, not to subject us!

The **Prophet Ezekiel** foretold this in our **First Reading** **when God** said through him, “*I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock*”
How does a shepherd tend his flock? **Lovingly, caringly, faithfully.**

How comforting to know that **Our King, Jesus**, is the **Good Shepherd**, who is always looking out for us. And **He** promises to keep looking for us **even** when we wander off into places that are “*cloudy and dark.*”

God says in this passage, “*I will rescue them ... I will give them rest ... I will seek out ... I will bring back ... I will bind up ... I will heal!*”

How different that is from **many** of the human kings in history ...
such as **King Henry VIII**, who had **the reputation** of beheading
all those who turned away from him, including 2 of his **6 wives**.

Jesus is **both King and Shepherd**. His **goal** is not to condemn **but to save**.
He never ceases to call us to come back into **the fold** here on earth ...
so that we'll have the chance to reign under Him in the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

We're free to choose **whether** we follow **the calls** of **the Shepherd** or not. **But** we
must know that we'll be judged by **the King** at the end of our lives. In **Ezekiel** today,
the **Lord** says, “*I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams & goats.”*”

How interesting that 500 years later, **Jesus** would use the **very same language** in
speaking of **what will happen on** **the last day** of the world. In **Matthew's Gospel**,
that we heard today, **Jesus** announced that “*when (He) comes in his glory ...*
all the nations will be assembled before Him. And he will separate them
one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.””

What will be the basis of this separation?
What will determine whether one is a **sheep** or a **goat**?

Quite simply it will be:
those who have lived their lives for **others**, will be judged as **sheep**, and
those who have lived their lives for **themselves** will be judged as **goats**.

So how does **Jesus, our King**, want us to serve Him?
He wants us to serve Him by serving one another.
He clearly points out in today's **Gospel** that **when** we serve our **brothers and sisters**,
we're really serving Him. **He's not here, but** our brothers and sisters are!

What's at stake? Being allowed into **God's Kingdom** ... or being shut out!

The **Kingdom of God** that we cannot see right now is **real** ...
notice how often we refer to it in **our prayers** at **Mass**.

The **Creed**, “*He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,*
and his Kingdom will have no end.”

Eucharistic Prayer; “*To our departed brothers & sisters & to all who were pleasing*
to you at their passing from this life, give them kind admittance to your Kingdom.”

The **Our Father** “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen!

All of us are privileged to be working in the **Earthly** Kingdom.
Yet our goal is to minister to God in the **Heavenly** Kingdom.

How do we get there? **Jesus** says we get there by caring for those around us.
He says today, “*Whatever you did for the least of your brothers, you did for Me.*”

Let’s recognize the **great dignity** we have of being in the **Kingdom of God** on earth.
And **the great dignity** we have in being messengers of The King!

You know, I couldn’t tell you much more than I already did about Julius Caesar ...
But I could talk to your for hours about Jesus Christ!

And **so could you ... because** you know the story about Him!

Just by faithfully coming to Mass over the years, you know all about Him ...
That He was born in **Bethlehem** in the year zero, that **His Mother** was the Virgin Mary, His Foster-Father was **Joseph**, they took Him to **Egypt** to escape the command of Herod to kill the children, that He walked on water, changed water into wine, multiplied the loaves and fed 5000, that He raised Lazarus from the dead, that he was baptized by John the Baptist, and transfigured before **Peter, James and John ...** that he raised Himself from the dead and lives forever to make intercession for us.

You don’t need a **Degree in Theology**; you’re well equipped to be His Messenger.

This is **the very direction** of **Pope Francis** in his work, “*The Joy of the Gospel*”.
There, he’s calling us to be zealous messengers of the King ...
You know the story ... so just share the story!

Let’s be good messengers of the King ...
by spreading the Good News of our salvation in Christ,
and by caring for the least of our brothers and sisters.

If we do, then **one day** we’ll be pleased to hear Jesus, our King say to us,
*“Come blessed of my Father,
inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!”*