

All the tribes of Israel anointed David as their King, as Saul was their king in days past. But before Saul, the King of Israel was God, leading His people through Prophets and Judges like Moses and Samuel. God was, in a sense, a hidden king. He was not an earthly king sitting on an earthly throne, but He was no less the King of Israel.

The people, however, rejected God and asked the prophet Samuel to anoint for them an earthly king. They wanted to be like other nations.

God warned them of the consequences.

In the first Book of Samuel God warned the people: An earthly king will “take your sons and assign them to his chariots and horses, and they will run before his chariot. He will appoint from among them his commanders of thousands and of hundreds. He will make them do his plowing and harvesting and produce his weapons of war and chariotry. He will use your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will tithe your crops and grape harvests to give to his officials and his servants. He will take your male and female slaves, as well as your best oxen and donkeys, and use them to do his work. He will also tithe your flocks. As for you, you will become his slaves. On that day you will cry out because of the king whom you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you on that day.”

In spite of this warning, the people persisted in their hard heartedness, and Samuel anointed Saul, King of Israel.

The Hebrew word for anointing is *māšāā*, it is the word that comes down to us as messiah. In Greek the word is *christos*, the Christ. Jesus, the Christ, the messiah, the anointed one, is the King of the New Israel, the Church He founded on the rock of Peter.

But He is not an earthly king, His kingdom is not of the world, His kingdom transcends this world. He does not sit on a throne of gold and jewels and silk cushions. His throne is made of rough wood, in the form of a cross.

He is also a hidden king, hidden from those who reject Him. As His incarnate form dies upon the cross, He is mocked and derided, His bride, the Church, is scorned, and His followers insulted.

Christ's Kingdom is built on the power of God's unconditional love for each one of us. On the cross Jesus reveals that love by suffering and dying for our salvation, even while we were still sinners. In the Resurrection he will reveal that unconquerable power.

In Him everything continues in being, through His blood on the cross. All of creation is subject to Christ as King because all of creation is sustained by His active will. Without Christ all of creation would cease to exist.

From the very beginning God conceived the world in such a way that it would become the Kingdom of His beloved Son. Everything would be reconciled in Him so that we might be redeemed, and our sins forgiven, through Him.

God's love for the world, and for each of us, becomes apparent in the sacrifice of His Son. His love for us remains, even in the face of mockery by Jews and Gentiles, even when His followers deny and desert Him.

When I was growing up I loved the stories of hidden kings. For example Richard the Lionheart revealing himself at just the right moment in the Adventures of Robin Hood. But most of all I remember the story of Odysseus.

Odysseus, was the king of Ithaca. He was absent from his kingdom for twenty years, first in fighting in the Trojan War, and then in trying to find his way home. Back in Ithaca he has been declared dead and 108 suitors descended upon his house. They ransacked his stores, insulted his servants, and scorned his wife Penelope, pressuring her to marry one of them which would make that suitor the new king of Ithaca.

Odysseus finally returns home but he is hidden. He enters among the suitors but he is taken for a beggar in rags. He is not recognized by those who have rejected him as king. But he is recognized by those most faithful to him, his dog, an elderly servant, and his son Telemachus.

Penelope comes to the suitors carrying the bow of Odysseus. She tells them that whoever can string the bow is the man she will marry and that man will be the new king. Many try but of course they all fail because none of them is the true king.

Odysseus asks to try and the suitors sneer at him but Penelope gives him the bow and he strings it easily. The suitors are amazed and

terrified, the king has returned. His house is cleansed, his servants are justified and his bride is redeemed.

This is our king. He is hidden from those who reject Him. Pilate provokes the Jews by placing a sign over the Crucified One that reads “This is the King of the Jews.” The soldier who read it mocked Jesus as much as did the leaders of the people. They called up to Him, “if you are the King of the Jews then save yourself.” But one man takes the inscription seriously, the thief that is crucified alongside Him. He turns to Jesus with the words, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Here the inscription tacked to the cross is understood for the first time. The Kingdom of God, is the Kingdom of Christ. The ancient Psalms that proclaim “God is King,” are transformed into “Christ is King.” This is the first dawning of the universal royal power of Jesus.

When Our Lord returns on the Last Day, those who rejected Him will be banished, those who remained faithful will be rewarded, His house will be cleansed and His bride will be redeemed.

Christ the King has conquered, and His Kingdom will last forever.

Even though many will not acknowledge it, every person seeks an interior peace and a sense of purpose. But we will only find these if we allow ourselves to be ruled by Christ, and entrust our lives to His care.

We all want to make a difference in the world, we all want our lives to matter. Today we are reminded that those desires are good and proper,

that we have been created for something greater than passing comforts, empty pleasures, superficial popularity, and earthly achievements.

In 1925 Pope Pius XI wrote: “Oh, what happiness would be Ours if all men, individuals, families, and nations, would but let themselves be governed by Christ! Then at length will many evils be cured; then will the law regain its former authority; peace with all its blessings be restored. Men will sheathe their swords and lay down their arms when all freely acknowledge and obey the authority of Christ, and every tongue confesses that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.”

We can fulfill our our desires by simply following Christ, by making Him more and more the center of our lives.

Christ is our King, our Savior, our Companion, and the Friend of our soul. He knows us through and through, and He loves us without limit.

And it is very easy to follow Him.

All we have to do is decide that our priority in life will be to know Jesus, to love Jesus, and to imitate Jesus Christ a little bit more each day, to let ourselves be governed by Christ the King.

We come to know Him through prayer and study of His Word in the Gospels and the Church's teaching.

We come to love him by obeying his commandments and the voice of our conscience formed in that study.

And we come to imitate him by loving our neighbors - without exception, without playing favorites - just as He has loved us.

Viva Christo Rey, long live Christ the King, blessings on Him and on those who love Him.