

Meditations: Solemnity of Christ the King (Year C)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the feast of Christ the King.

- Jesus is the King of the Universe and of each of us
- The apparent weakness of Christ's reign
- Service is the true power

THE END of the liturgical year is marked by the solemnity of Christ the King. These weeks, during which

the Church asks us to consider the final things, lead us towards the certainty that Christ is the Lord of universal history and of the personal history of each one of us. “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth” (*Col 1:15-16*). Nothing that happens escapes his knowledge. None of our cares or desires are lost, since He governs all creation.

Regnare Christum volumus. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo chose these words as his episcopal motto: we want Christ to reign. This is one of the aspirations that Saint Josemaría often prayed from a very young age. He said that “Christ should reign first and foremost in our soul. But how would we reply if he asked us: ‘How do you go about letting me reign in you?’ I would reply that, for him to reign in me, I need his abundant grace. Only in this way will my every

heartbeat and breath, my least intense look, my most ordinary word, my most basic feeling be transformed into a hosanna to Christ my King.”^[1]

“Today Jesus asks us to let him become our king. A king who, with his word, his example and his life immolated on the Cross, has saved us from death. And this king indicates the path to those who are lost, gives new light to our existence marred by doubt, fear and the trials of each day. But we must not forget that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world. He will give new meaning to our lives, sometimes severely tested also by our errors and our sins, only on the condition that we do not follow the logic of the world and its ‘kings’.”^[2]

SHORTLY BEFORE Jesus' death, the leaders of the people and the soldiers began to insult Him: "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself" (*Lk 23:37*). His kingship remained hidden from those men. They thought that true power lay in political domination over others. They could not conceive how this person, about to die on the cross, was someone important.

Our Lord's response to these insults is eloquent. He doesn't try to defend himself. His reign is that of one who gives himself for us, and only thus does our salvation begin. Jesus "wants to accomplish the Father's will to the end, and to establish his kingdom not with weapons and violence, but with the apparent weakness of life-giving love. The kingdom of God is a kingdom utterly different from those on earth."^[3] This "apparent weakness" is what wins our freedom; it gives life to the world

and to people, draws good out of evil and infuses grace without imposing itself.

Perhaps it was precisely this “weakness” that won the heart of the “good thief.” When the other thief challenged Jesus to save them from the cross, he dared to make a bolder plea: “Remember me when you come into your kingdom” (*Lk 23:42*). He realized that Jesus was a king, but that his kingdom was not of this world. Therefore he begs Jesus, in the kingdom where He will exercise his power, to not forget the one who had suffered with Him. And what he obtains from this King is far greater than anything he could have imagined: “Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (*Lk 23:43*).

EVERY CHRISTIAN is called to be Christ passing by for those around them. Looking at our Lord on the Cross inspires us to give ourselves like Him. His example leads us to love unconditionally. Those who truly give themselves lay down their weapons and renounce self-defense. Thus we learn to listen without imposing ourselves, to value the good in each person, to offer our time and the joy in our heart without expecting anything in return.

In Christ's silence in the face of those who were mocking Him, we discover that it is of little use to try to prove we are right or to get our way; even the good we do loses its value if we are not motivated by a sincere desire to serve, like Christ in his Passion.

“Service! How I love this word!” Saint Josemaría said. “To serve my King and, through him, all those who have been redeemed by his blood. If only we Christians knew how to

serve! For only by serving can we come to know and love Christ, and make him known and loved.”^[4]

The Archangel Gabriel foretold to Mary that her Son would reign forever. Later on, not without some perplexity, she began to understand what kind of kingship Jesus would exercise. We can ask our Mother to help us understand and live, ever more deeply, that gentle way in which her Son reigns.

^[1] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 181.

^[2] Francis, Angelus, 25 November 2018.

^[3] Benedict XVI, Homily, 25 November 2012.

^[4] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 182.

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(01/23/2026)