

## Come Holy Spirit fill our Hearts with the Fathers Love

On this day of Christ the king, we, Americans do not have much knowledge of kingship except from movies or videos of the Queen of England and the royal family. Today most of our world leaders are wholly inaccessible to us. They are behind many layers of staff and security. We see them only on the video Media making announcements and gestures from afar. Yet it wasn't always so. Most kings had more immediate contact with their subjects. Many kings had certain days on which their subjects could line up to talk to them. It is said that St. Athanasius ran up to the emperor on his horse one day, grabbed the reins, and proceeded to debate a theological point with him. Even until relatively recently, US presidents had office hours. It is said that on Tuesdays, Abraham Lincoln received visitors from among the citizenry, who sought to speak to him of their concerns. They would line up at the door without formal appointments and he'd listen to them, one by one. As our culture has become more violent and public figures more widely recognized and vulnerable, leaders now tend to live in sealed, bulletproof, and figuratively soundproof worlds, hearing little from "ordinary people" and mainly from their staff.

The first reading, from Ezekiel 34, speaks of the Lord in terms of a shepherd who cares for his flock. Some of the lines that summarize His care are, *I myself will look after and tend my sheep ... I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark ... I myself will give them rest ... The lost I will seek out ... The strayed I will bring back ... The injured I will bind up. The sick I will heal.*

Our second reading speaks of the victory of Jesus over all things, saying that He *has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep; that He has reversed what Adam did; that He is the first fruits, then each one in proper order will also rise.* It says that He will *hand the kingdom over to God his Father when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power and that he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet, the last enemy to be destroyed being death.*

Here we have a conquering king who in Hebrews tells us *In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death* (Heb 2:8-10).

So while at times it seems that evil triumphs, God is working. One by one, He is putting all His enemies under His feet. One day even death itself will be destroyed. The paradox of the Cross shouts to us that God conquers, not by brutality and cruel strength, but by love and by things such as forgiveness and mercy—things the world dismisses as weak.

The Gospel teaches us that Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. And in this coming we will discover that we have known Him all along, but in a paradoxical way. As Christ comes and takes His seat and all are summoned to Him, we are going to have a strange sense that we've met Him before. And He will confirm that.

For indeed, we have met His Majesty. He is a King who is hungry, thirsty, sick, lonely, a foreigner, in prison, and a stranger. And the list He gives should not be seen as exhaustive, for He is in the needy, whether rich or poor. He is in the discouraged loved one who cannot find a job; He is in our children who need to be taught and encouraged; he is in the co-worker who just lost his wife; he is in the customer who was diagnosed with cancer. He is in the lost youth or family member who needs instruction and needs to be drawn back to the Sacraments. He's even in you, in your struggles and needs.

We have met this King every day. And He is not merely saying that these people have some moral union with Him. He is saying, mystically, that He IS each one of them. And when we cared for them, we were not simply doing something ethical; we were serving and caring for *Him*: "*You did it for me.*"

Jesus is our King: a caring and close King, a conquering King who never forces, a King who is hungry and thirsty, a King who reigns from the Cross, a King who dies so we don't have to, a King who washes our feet, a King who comes to serve rather than to be served. He is a King, all right, one who rules with love, not by force. He is our King and you meet Him every day: in the Eucharist, in the poor, in His Word, in your heart, in the events of your day ... in your very self.