

One of the most vivid memories that I have of the house in Violet where I grew up is a little sign that was nailed to the wall next to the front door. Every person who came to the house would see this sign, which was a simple metal cross. And written on the cross were these words from the book of Joshua: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” These words come from Joshua’s response to a choice that he placed before the whole Hebrew people: would they serve the pagan gods of the nations or would they serve the Lord, the God of Israel?

This decisive choice of the Old Testament has not gone away. Even today, Holy Mother Church reminds us of the same thing - we must choose whom we will serve. As we come to the last week of the liturgical year, the Church gives us the correct answer to the great question: whom shall I serve? The one that we must serve is Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Christ the King is the one to whom we must turn with our whole hearts. He is the Lord who asks for our faithful allegiance, for our tireless service. Today, Holy Mother Church reminds us that Jesus Christ is our King.

Since Jesus Christ is our King, a fair question to ask is: where is His Kingdom? The readings make it clear that Christ is a heavenly King. The prophet Daniel tells us that He comes on the clouds and He is presented before the Ancient One - God the Father. The Book of Revelation even tells us that the angels and the saints surround his throne in heaven. Christ is, without a doubt, the King of Heaven.

But isn't His kingdom also here on earth? From a quick glance at the Gospel, it seems that Jesus says, "No." When Pontius Pilate questions Jesus before His Passion, Jesus answers him with this: "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." It seems that Jesus himself is saying that his kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, but not an earthly kingdom. Yet, the feast we celebrate today is not Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of Heaven; we celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Christ is King of both Heaven and Earth.

So how can Jesus say that His Kingdom does not belong to this world? Well, when the Lord answers Pilate, He is speaking about where His Kingdom comes from. Jesus is the King and He has come down from Heaven, so His Kingdom also comes from Heaven because where the King is, there must His Kingdom be. Since the Word was made flesh, since God became man to dwell among us, the kingdom of God has become also an earthly Kingdom.

But if God's Kingdom is here among us, why is it so hard for us to see it? If Christ is King of the Universe, wouldn't we expect to more easily recognize the Kingdom of God on Earth? Well, sometimes the Kingdom of God on earth is referred to as "already, but not yet." In heaven, God's kingdom is perfectly fulfilled. The saints and angels enjoy the fullness of that perfect Kingdom. Here on earth, Christ's Kingdom is already present, but it is not yet perfectly fulfilled. And the reason why it is not yet perfectly fulfilled is that we have not yet finished our work.

The visible expression of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth is the Church; and the Church is given the mission to spread this kingdom to the ends of the earth. But we're not finished yet. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ on Earth is not perfectly fulfilled because God is still accomplishing His work through us.

In those moments when we wonder why we can't see God's kingdom among us, we must look at ourselves; we must examine our own lives. As members of the Church, as members of the Kingdom, we are called to serve the King. So, do we truly serve him? Often we can fall into the trap of having a little compartment of our lives that we dedicate to God and to our faith. But serving Christ the King doesn't just mean an hour a week on Sundays, it doesn't just mean spending a few minutes in prayer each day talking to the Lord. Serving Christ the King means giving everything to Christ - Everything! If Christ is truly to be the king of our lives, we cannot place limits on his kingship. We cannot tell Christ, "I'll give you this part of my life, but I'm keeping this other part for myself." We can't say, "I'll put you first when I pray and go to church, but not the rest of the time." If we do this, we are not making Christ the King of our lives, we are making ourselves the kings of our lives.

Christ, the King of the Universe, wants to be the King of every part of us. In our families and in our friendships, Christ must be the King. In school and in our jobs, Christ must be the King. In the places we go, in the things we read or watch, in the music we listen to, Christ must be the King. To give Christ anything less than everything means that He is not truly the King of our lives.

Now, this is a challenge for all of us. All of us have areas of our lives where we want to be in control - areas that we would rather not give over to the Lord. But his grace is sufficient for us. The Lord will teach us how to make Him our King. This feast of Christ the King reminds us to ask ourselves, what are the biggest areas in my life where I am not allowing Christ to be the King? When we recognize those areas that we keep to ourselves, those areas where we feel the need to be in control, that is the time for us to bring them to the Lord in prayer, in confession, in the Mass and to ask for the grace to let Christ be our King.

As we gather here for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we prepare to experience the Real Presence of our King in the Eucharist. Let us turn to Him in humble adoration and ask for the grace to be His true servants. May Christ who is King of the universe reign in our hearts and lead us to the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven.