

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King (B)
(Daniel 7:13-14 / John 18:33-37)
25.11.2018

Dear brothers and sisters,

“Yes, I am a king” Jesus answered Pilate. The Lord Jesus *is* the king of the universe! In him *everything* was created. We read in St John’s prologue: “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being”. In him *we* were created. He accompanies us day after day, moment by moment, as we journey along the path of life; “he who is the way, the truth and the life”, is our way, our truth and our life. At the end of time, he will take us into his kingdom where with him we shall praise the Father for ever.

Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ is the king of the universe and our king, but **his kingdom is not of this world**. Let us not forget that when Christ proclaimed his kingship – “Yes, I am a king” – he stood before Pilate as a beaten and defeated man. Jesus came into the world to preach the good news of God’s infinite love for all human beings without exception. But things did not run smoothly for him. His message was not accepted. He met with a lot of opposition. In a sense, his ministry was a fiasco. Judas, one of his apostles, betrayed him. From there on, Jesus went through his passion nearly alone. Peter, the first of his apostles, denied him three times. At the end, Jesus had just enough strength left to complain to the unheeding sky: “My God, my God, why have you forgotten me?” To human eyes, his death had all the appearances of a failure.

But, paradoxically, the truth is that in his death Jesus reigns. In his death Jesus is king. The cross is his throne of glory. The sign of Jesus’ victory over death is that the Father raised him from the dead. Thus Jesus teaches us that the cross is the unavoidable path to life.

The death of Jesus was his victory because he went through all these oppositions and trials **out of love**, *out of love for his Father* to whom he remained faithful, faithful to the mission he had confided to him, and *out of love for us*, teaching us the way to life, the way to salvation, and forgiving those who opposed him. He had placed his faith and hope in his loving Father and was not disappointed.

Christ’s life is the standard for ours.

In our life of faith, we meet with opposition. Our Christian witness is far from being always well received or bearing fruit. We try to be faithful to our Christian vocation, but we experience indifference irony, rejection. We know only too well the taste of failure!

In our ordinary life, our human enterprises are not always successful. Illness, unemployment, marriage breakdowns, failures of many kinds, not to mention our personal fears and weaknesses are our daily lot.

Two ways are placed before us:

Either we make our way through all these life situations placing our confidence *in ourselves*, and we shall experience anger, resentment, anguish and depression, or else we place our faith and our hope *in the Lord*, our king and loving Saviour. If we choose this way – which was the one chosen by Jesus – new life will arise from our failures, not always without previous suffering, because there is no birth without birth pangs. But the seeds of death in our lives can be transformed by God’s grace into seeds of life. The awareness of our weaknesses and sins can make us compassionate towards others.

What is important is not what happens to us, but what we do with what happens to us, how we manage with it, how we make our way through it. What can appear to be a failure can in fact transpire to be a victory given to us by the Lord. Our cross can become a throne of glory. The point is to take the decision to place our trust and hope in God's eternal love for us.

Christ is our king, but he does not impose his kingship or his authority upon us. He proposes it to us. It is up to us to accept it by listening to his voice and putting it into practice.

The Scriptures and God's grace help us to believe that Christ is *the king of the universe*. But we have to take one step further, by confessing that Christ is *king of our lives*. We have to introduce the Lord's kingship to all the areas and details of our daily lives, into all our decision-making and actions. We have to welcome the Lord's continual presence by our side. On that point we all struggle. To confess that Christ is king one Sunday a year is quite easy compared to confessing Christ as the king of our whole life every day of the year. We need a special grace to acknowledge his kingship; we have to ask for it in prayer not only for ourselves but also for one another. Lord, may your kingdom come in our daily lives so that we may be ready to follow you into your kingdom when you will come to take us to live with you in your kingdom at the end of our lives here on earth.