

The Kingship Of Christ - by Sr. Margaret Dorgan, DCM

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THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

We celebrate the feast of Christ the King and ask ourselves what kind of kingship Jesus exercises over us. America has no history of kings who have lived within its borders, but we citizens of the United States are subject to authority chosen through an election process.

How does Jesus rule? A dialogue about His kingship took place at a time when His power seemed to have reached its lowest ebb. Bound by the Jewish council of priests, elders, and scribes, He has been delivered to Pilate who asked Him, "Are you king of the Jews? His answer, "You have said so" (Mk 15:2). In the subsequent interchange between Jesus and his accusers, Pilate will not let go of his ironic assignment of kingship to this criminal brought before him. The soldiers guarding Jesus mock Him. " All hail! King of the Jews," (Mk 15:18) they shout as they spit upon Him and kneel in comic posture at His feet. Here is our King subject to insult, made the butt of jokes, taunted with laughter and derision.

Have we experienced the scorn of others and felt ourselves disdained and ridiculed? At such times, we turn to our King in His darkest hours and realize how deeply human judgment can cut. In Jesus' case, He was wholly innocent. We may deserve the blame imputed to us or we may be the objects of unfair reproach. In either case, we find in Jesus the One Who lifts our hearts and understands what it is to be subject to human disdain.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, the inscription of the charge against him read "The King of the Jews" (Mk 15:26). Here is royalty where all sovereignty seems to have been wiped away. He is nailed to a wooden throne. And yet in these three hours on Calvary, sin is overcome and humankind is redeemed. Our King fulfills His mission through a crucifixion leading to His resurrection. Death is conquered. A new kingdom is inaugurated, but not one based on the policies most people would expect.

During His public life, Jesus had employed many images to explain the reign of God. He did not use spectacles of glory and splendor. When He spoke of the kingdom He came to inaugurate, He likened it to the most ordinary things that were part of daily existence at his time: the planting of a mustard seed, yeast a woman took and kneaded into measures of flour, a dragnet cast into the sea, a treasure hidden in a field.

Hiddenness seems to have been a special quality of His kingdom. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last" (Mt 20:16). Looking at the crowds who followed Him, he chose a little child to embody what His Good News is all about. "It is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs" (Mk 10:13). The category for admission is not according to human estimation. Jesus for His contemporaries and for our

secular society today is a Man of paradox. He affirmed clearly that His reign contradicts worldly values (Jn 18:36).

Jesus declared, " I must announce the good news of the reign of God, because that is why I was sent" (Lk 4:43). Fame and wealth do not open the doors of Christ's kingdom but neither are the prosperous barred from entry if they are humble of heart and poor in spirit. Eternal riches can be ours already if we let go of pride and self-centeredness. The laws of Jesus kingdom are all rooted in love and the willingness to share. We look around us to see those who are in need and when we can, we offer a portion of what has been given to us—material or spiritual. It could be just a word of encouragement. We take time--a precious commodity in our American culture—to assist someone who needs a helping hand. We see Christ in others and hear His voice in their pleading. "Blest are your eyes because they see and blest are your ears because they hear" (Mt 13:16).

St. Paul tells us that we have been "rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's beloved Son" Col 1:12-13). Jesus seeks now to establish His throne within our innermost being. We find Him there in prayer. In that interior stillness, He speaks to us. **"To you the mystery of the reign of God has been confided"** (Mk 4:11).

We ask Christ our King to increase our understanding of this mystery and to help us bring others to the treasures that faith in Him unlocks.

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