

Christ the King, St. Francis Xavier's Church, 2 Sam. 5:1-3; Ps. 122:1-5; Col. 1:12-20; Lk. 23:35-43

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Dear brothers and sisters, from a human perspective, the contrast could not be greater: we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe, and the Gospel reminds us of the crucifixion of Jesus, who is laughed at and mocked. Above his head hangs a sign: *Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*, or Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. How do we come to celebrate this feast and recognise both his earthly and heavenly kingship? To answer this question, we must first return to the first reading, to King David. This King David, so strikingly portrayed in Michelangelo's sculpture, was king of Israel around the year 1000 BC. He was anointed king for three reasons: He belonged to their own people. That is one. They knew and appreciated his leadership qualities. That is two. For when King Saul was still ruling, David was the one who won victories. But the most important reason is mentioned in the Second Book of Samuel: God himself appointed him king. At a young age, David was anointed by the prophet Samuel in Bethlehem. This is described in a beautiful passage in the first book of Samuel. The prophet visits Jesse, who introduces him to all his sons. Except for the youngest, who is tending sheep. Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him, for we will not sit down to eat until he arrives.' The boy arrives and the Lord says: "Arise, anoint him, for he is the one." And from that moment on, the spirit of the Lord takes hold of David. God chooses the simple shepherd boy to become king.

There is therefore a gap of about 1,000 years between Jesus and David, but Jesus is called the Son of David because Joseph, Mary's husband, was a distant descendant of King David. Several church fathers have pointed out that also Mary was of David's descent.

With Christ the King, we celebrate the kingship of Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One. How different his kingship is from that of David and all other kings!

He must undergo the ultimate humiliation and great suffering through his crucifixion. It is precisely then, when He hangs on the cross, that a dispute arises about his kingship. 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Messiah.' It is, notably, one of the other two condemned men, whom we know

as 'the good thief,' who recognises Jesus' kingship. 'Jesus, remember me when You come into your kingdom.' And just as Jesus did during his earthly life, he granted the wishes of simple people, of the sick and of people who had to live with physical disabilities. He does the same now, just before his death: he grants the wish of the murderer who fears the Lord. 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

Dear friends, the kingship of Jesus is of a completely different nature than that of all other kings and queens. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the king of the universe. He is the One who can lead us to paradise.

The signs of his kingship are already visible: Christ is the head of the Church. He brings people together, just as we are gathered here on a cold November day. He brings together large crowds, in real life, such as on the World Youth Days or online, with the 18.6 million people who follow Pope Leo on X. On the feast of Christ the King, we celebrate that Jesus is the first to rise from the dead, to be supreme in all things. Thanks to him, we too can live in the light and share in the inheritance of the saints. In Him, all things in heaven and earth are reconciled, and we can live in peace. Amen.