

# Read

Daniel 7:13-14

Psalm 93:1a, 1b-2, 5

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33b-37

## LIVING THE WORD

# Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 21, 2021



## REFLECTION

Royal power can harm if it's not used right. This is one of many lessons I picked up from the Disney blockbuster *Frozen*. Elsa learns that the hard way when she sends Arendelle into an eternal winter the night she is crowned queen. Then she accidentally freezes her own sister Anna's heart. Devastated by the destruction she caused, the young royal sequesters herself in her castle. In the end, Elsa, Anna, and the whole town discovers the only force stronger than power: love.

Love wins, always. Today's Solemnity of Christ the King raises up love as the greatest, guiding force. Jesus overturns the traditional model of being in charge. His kingdom is not bound by worldly ways. In Christ's reign, there are no more power trips, no more greedy gains and other sins that often plague human governance. Selfless, loving, sacrificial: this is the kind of kingdom Jesus builds for the universe, now until the day of eternity. When we are given any kind of power, whether that be in our families, schools, or communities, Christ the King demands we use it in loving service.



## ACTION

Make a list of all the leaders you can think of from different walks of life: family members, coaches, teachers, government officials, celebrities, and so on. List out the qualities that make them effective (or ineffective) leaders. Think about how you can emulate the positive qualities in your daily life.

**"I need nothing but God,  
and to lose myself in the  
heart of Jesus."**

—St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

## QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you know when someone is a good leader?
- ❖ In what areas of your life do you hold some power or authority? How can you use it in service of others?



November 21, 2021

# SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

## LECTIONARY #161B

Daniel 7:13-14

Psalm 93:1a, 1b-2, 5

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33b-37

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Throughout the Gospel texts, Jesus specifically calls us friends, not servants. He also tells us that his yoke is easy, and his burden light. Jesus is our king, and he is the king of all creation. We are not his unwilling and forced subjects; we are his beloved friends. It is he who first served us, and it is he who first loved us. He is the one who gave us the gift of eternal life with him in heaven. We gratefully embrace the kingship of our Lord, who offered such self-giving love for our lives. We do not take on his yoke because we have no choice; we embrace Christ and his ways freely and without force. It is a joy to embrace our own place in the universe when the king is Christ our Lord.

**Q FOCUS:** *Our Lord is a king of love, sacrifice, and service.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, and on this day each year we observe the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. This feast was established nearly a hundred years ago by Pope Pius XI. On this day we remember that no matter what the issues in society and politics might be, our Lord is king of the universe, eternal and always present. What is happening in our society does matter to us, of course, but as Christians we are reminded that what happens on earth at any level of government

should be informed by our faith in Christ and our desire to make the kingdom of God a reality on earth.

### Church Teaching Connection

Today's solemnity provides us with an opportunity to profess our belief in Jesus and his essential role in our salvation. Each week at Mass when we recite the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed we state our beliefs and proclaim the faith of the Church. The word *creed* is from the Latin word *credo*, which means "I believe." In these creeds we say what we believe about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We describe our relationship with God, the Church, creation, and all people. These beliefs are what shape our Christian life, from the moment of our baptism. We profess our faith and our trust in Christ's paschal mystery as the way of our salvation (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 185-197).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

John 18:33b-37

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief

priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "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." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

Jesus' title "King of the Universe" is rooted in the humblest of beginnings. Kings are usually born in palaces and are raised in grandeur. Historically they rule by power and force; people are born as subjects to kings. Jesus, king of the universe, was born in the humblest of places, and he lived a humble life. He rules in love, and not force. We choose to be his people every day, and we aren't forced to be his subjects. Jesus is a king of love and choices, and instead of forcing his rule upon us, he asks us to embrace it of our own free will. Especially as we ready ourselves to begin the season of Advent, we recall the poverty in which our Lord was born, and the glory in which he was raised as he conquered death and redeemed humanity.

► What are some examples of the ways that we choose to follow Jesus, to embrace his rule of love?

► How would you describe Jesus' kingship to a friend who might not be a Christian?

What does it mean that Jesus is the king of the universe? Certainly he wasn't the typical earthly king familiar to Pilate, Herod, and the common people of

his time. He didn't call himself "King of Palestine" or "King of Nazareth." Instead Jesus modeled a leadership of service, teaching, and tremendous love to all those he encountered. He offered humility instead of self-importance, and charity in place of ensuring a grand life for himself. This new image of a king turned the whole world upside down.

Jesus' poverty reminds us of what true kingship (true leadership, true devotion to people, true majesty) means. In our faith the king is a model of servanthood. We who follow this king are called to be like Jesus in his attitude of service and love. We are called to be the hands and feet of our king.

► How can we serve others as Jesus served others? What are our current roles in life, and how do we serve in those roles?

One way to think about our service to Jesus and others is through our vocation. Our vocation is the state of life that God calls us to. In that state of life, we serve God through our daily actions. Our state of life will probably change in the future. Perhaps you will be called to marriage, and serve a spouse and family. Perhaps you will be called to remain single, serving your friends and family through your free time and resources. In both of these vocations, you can also serve God through your job and the choices you make. Perhaps you may be called to religious life, and you may be called to serve God and his people in active ministry or in a monastery. There are many ways to serve God and God's people.

In our lives we are sometimes are distracted by things we put into a place of importance today. Sports events, tests, drama with friends, and planning for the future all take a leading role in our lives. Those things are real things, and they can be stressful as young people grow into adulthood. However, we are reminded today that in all these things we should put our lives at the service of our king, Jesus, who is Lord of heaven and earth.

## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 66.

**Jesus is a king who embraces love and freedom over fame and force.**

**Jesus' kingship is one of servanthood, and that measure of kingship informs our understanding of God.**

**As Christians we follow Christ, our king, and be a servant to all in our daily actions and choices.**

## Act on the Word

### Serving God in a Vocation

*For this activity, you will need poster board, markers, and magazines with pictures of people living their vocations. If possible, invite a married person/couple, a priest, a permanent deacon, and/or a non-ordained religious (monk, sister, nun) to answer questions about vocations.*

Begin this activity by engaging the young people in a discussion about the different vocations that are part of our Church. Be sure to present this information with equal dignity to the different vocations. Assure teens that at this point in their lives there are many options open to them, and discuss the importance of discernment, and that people often don't know what they are called to be until they are older.

In the discussion, be sure to mention the service to which different vocations are directed. Spouses in marriage help each other and their children go to heaven someday, sisters and friars live lives of active ministry, diocesan priests or permanent deacons serve parishes, and nuns and monks live in monasteries have lives of work and prayer. In all of these

vocations, each person is called to serve God and others in their daily actions.

If your parish has people in different vocations willing to speak to the teens, invite them to share with the young people what their lives are like, and how they serve God and his people in their vocations. Allow time for questions.

When the discussion is finished, use the poster board for making a visual reminder of all that was learned. Have the teens work in small groups to use photos or words to depict vocations. An example using words alone would be to start with the word *nun* in big letters, and write attributes of religious life around it. Likewise, with pictures, you can start with the term *marriage* and attach pictures of husbands and wives serving God, one another, and their families. Keep these projects where the young people can see them regularly; they can be a good reminder of the vocations to which they may be called.

### Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe,  
teach us the way to your Kingdom:*

*the way of justice, the way of love,  
the way of peace.*

*You live and reign with the Father and  
the Holy Spirit, one God,  
for ever and ever.*

*Amen.*

### For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*