

Read

Daniel 7:13-14

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

Revelation 1:5-8

John 18:33b-37

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 24, 2024



REFLECTION

The back and forth between Jesus and Pilate in today's Gospel highlights the misunderstanding of what it means to call Christ "king" and what his kingdom entails. Earthly kingdoms are ruled by people concerned with the social and political realities of this world. Jesus' concern goes far beyond this; his concern is for the salvation of the world. In his kingdom, that is, the kingdom of God, the goodness and truth of God guides all action, whereas in this world, sinful and selfish ways often seem to prevail.

The challenge for Christians is that we live in the world, but we belong to the kingdom of God; we are *in* the world but not *of* the world (see John 15:19 and Romans 12:2). There is a lot of pressure to measure our value and worth according to worldly standards, just to fit in. But that's not how it works in the kingdom of God. In our baptism, we are made members of that kingdom and become adopted sons and daughters of the king. We are called to live our lives in a way that makes Christ's kingdom a reality on earth by actively choose to live, love, and serve others as Christ, our king, does.



ACTION

Make a list of the most pressing concerns, worries, and areas of stress in your life. Then make a list of the concerns of Jesus' kingdom—what was Christ concerned with? Reexamine your first list and ask Christ to help you overcome these concerns so that you may dedicate more time to alleviating the concerns of his kingdom. Even though his kingdom does not belong to the world, Jesus is concerned about the salvation and well-being of all human beings. How can you help make that a reality?



"Mended"—Matthew West

<https://youtu.be/-Otg-5p7qug>

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does it mean for you to be in the world but not of the world?
- ❖ What does it mean to you to be a citizen of the kingdom of God?



November 24, 2024

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

LECTIONARY #161B

Daniel 7:13-14

Psalms 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

Today's celebration marks the last Sunday of the liturgical year. In the preceding weeks, the readings have grown more challenging as the Church turned its focus to the end times and what that means for believers. Today, we reflect on Jesus as our ultimate end. While the terms of *king* and *kingdom* are quite appropriately applied to Jesus, he is so far beyond a human understanding of these. He is not a political power or a figurehead. He is the divine ruler of the universe, and his kingdom belongs to the spiritual world. We are invited to discover this truth in our daily lives through our actions and attitudes.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus speaks the truth to us.
Listen to his voice.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

St. Andrew, the apostle, was one of the first apostles called by Jesus. The Church honors him on November 30. In the Gospel of John, Andrew is the first apostle named—he was a follower of John the Baptist and then chose to follow Jesus, inviting his brother Simon Peter to come meet the Messiah. Andrew is mentioned a few times throughout the Gospels, but we don't know a lot about him. Regardless, his status as one of the twelve apostles tells us that he was a faithful follower of Christ. Tradition holds that he shared the Good News in the

early Church in Greece and Asia Minor before his crucifixion on an X-shaped cross.

Church Teaching Connection

"To you, dear young people, I wish to repeat that the Church needs you, and I would like to add: you need the Church, because the Church desires only that you meet Jesus, the one who makes . . . [you] free to love and serve. The Church needs you because, after having experienced the true freedom that Christ alone can offer you, you will be able to witness to the Gospel among your peers, with courage, with great creativity, using the sensitivity and talents characteristic of your youth" (Pope John Paul II, Homily, November 23, 1997).

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:

► How might someone's voice sound if he or she was lying? What if that person was telling the truth?

It may not happen that often, but sometimes, by the tone of a person's voice, you can tell if a person is telling a lie. Maybe it is the way his or her voice goes slightly higher or sounds hesitant and shaky. Perhaps you have even done this yourself. You might also be able to tell when someone is telling the truth just by the tone of voice. There is a certain strength and confidence in it.

► Think about the two characters in our Gospel reading today. What do you think Pilate's tone was? What tone of voice do you imagine Jesus having as he responded to Pilate?

Pilate questions Jesus to find out the truth. And what truth does Jesus tell us today? Jesus reveals to Pilate, and to us, the reality of who he is: the king of the universe. But he was a king unlike any that Pilate, a Roman governor and political figure, or the religious leaders of the time, expected. Jesus was not a political king. He was not interested in gaining land and riches. He was not a warrior, like King David, there to usurp Roman authority. Jesus was not bound by a border; his reach went far beyond. He is king of the

universe and his truth goes out to the ends of the earth. His law is love and his life is service. His kingdom is for us and for all who desire to know the truth of who they are; the beloved of God.

It is with this assurance that the Church closes out the liturgical year. In light of our liturgical year ending and considering the omnipotence of Christ as the ruler of our lives and our hearts, we can take a few moments now to look back on God's faithfulness throughout time. He remained faithful to the covenants he made in the Old Testament, fulfilling them in wonderful ways. He did not leave us to remain separated from him by sin, but sent Jesus to be our salvation and the way back to relationship with him. In our own lives, and the lives of our families and friends, he has been faithful.

► How have you or those you know been blessed by God in this past year?

When we recognize God's blessings and faithfulness, we are recognizing his providence, his majesty, and his power over all creation and all our lives. This is what it means to honor Christ as our king. He provides for us, guides us, guards us, and brings us to God's heavenly kingdom. Our earthly lives might not always reflect this kingdom, but we can strive to be good citizens of it in each choice we make. When we sin, we are rejecting Jesus' kingship. When we choose to trust God, to listen to him and follow his will for our lives, we are honoring Christ's very nature.

Today, we can make some new year's resolutions for our liturgical year so that we can better follow Christ our king. We can commit to praying daily so that we listen to the voice of God and hear how God loves us. Rather than focusing "how much" we pray, let's focus on "how well" we pray. Be intentional about your prayer time. Another resolution we can make is about building up Christ's kingdom. Commit to sharing your blessings with others. The kingdom of God has no borders, neither should we. Through prayer and service, we crown Jesus the king of our lives.

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 74.

Jesus' kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms, nor is Jesus like any earthly king.

There is a temptation to deny Jesus' kingship by replacing him with other things in our hearts.

Prioritizing our prayer lives and service to others helps us to put Christ first.

Act on the Word

Banners for Christ

For this activity, you will need Bibles, butcher paper, markers or other drawing supplies, and tape.

Explain to the teens that in celebration of today's solemnity, they will be making banners to hang in your gathering space.

Begin by dividing the young people into small groups of four or five individuals; you can count them off or do a fun pairing activity of your choice. Then give each group a Bible, a large, banner-sized sheet of butcher paper, and drawing supplies. Ask the teens to create a celebratory banner that represents the leadership qualities of Jesus that they most admire. They can use the Bible to find stories of Jesus that represent his qualities of leadership. Encourage them to draw, create symbols, use words, and decorate their banner.

As the groups are working on the banner, they should also create a short chant that celebrates the qualities they are highlighting on their banner. This chant can be a couple of lines long. If they want, they can also incorporate this chant into the design of their banner.

Once the banners and chants are complete, ask each group to present them to the larger group. Encourage discussion and reflection on the qualities of a good leader. As you guide the discussion, incorporate concrete examples from Jesus' ministry of his leadership. Ask the young people how they can apply those qualities to their own lives.

Display the banners in your ministry space over the next several weeks and check in periodically with the teens to see how they have been adopting Jesus' leadership style into their own life.

Closing Prayer

**Mighty God,
you are the source of all life.**

Watch over us as we strive

to proclaim your Word,

and help us as we use our gifts

to build up your kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord.

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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.