

As you probably know, today is the feast day of Christ the King. It is always celebrated at the end of the liturgical year, the week before the first Sunday of Advent. And of course, the first Sunday of Advent is the beginning of the new liturgical year. Now, the history behind this feast day is kind of interesting, I think. The feast of Christ the King was first instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Most feast days that concern Jesus recall a certain event in Jesus' life or ministry, such as the Ascension of the Lord, or his transfiguration. But this feast day doesn't recall any event, it just reminds us of Jesus' messianic kingship. Therefore, there must have been a reason why a twentieth century pope would create this feast day. And the reason why he did it was this: Pope Pius XI instituted this feast day in order to counteract some of the growing anticatholic movements of the day, such as atheism and secularism. Obviously, this is a problem that hasn't gone away, and so this feast day continues to have much relevance for us today.

Even if a person isn't an outright atheist, it is difficult to escape the secularism all around us, which in some ways can be even more insidious in drawing us apart from God because it is more subtle. Pope Benedict XVI once said that the kind of secularism that we sometimes experience in the west poses a particular problem because "it allows for professing belief in God, and respects the public role of religion and the Churches, but at the same time it can subtly reduce religious belief to a lowest common denominator. Faith becomes a passive acceptance that certain things 'out there' are true, but without practical relevance for everyday life. The result is a growing separation of faith from life: living as if God did not exist. This is aggravated by an individualistic and eclectic approach to faith and religion...each person believes he or she has a right to pick and choose, maintaining external social bonds but without an integral interior conversion to the law of Christ. Consequently, rather than being transformed and renewed in mind, Christians are easily tempted to conform themselves to the spirit of this age."

So what the Pope is basically saying here is this: Our secular world makes it too easy to become wishy-washy in our faith. You see, your Catholic faith is meant to be extremely relevant to you, your Catholic faith is supposed to be interwoven into the very fabric of your everyday life. That is why we can't be superficial when it comes to our faith, otherwise, we'll never get it. Our faith is meant to make a real and meaningful difference to us and every aspect of our lives because this is where truth is found.

Jesus says that everyone who belongs to the truth hears his voice. So if Jesus isn't an important part of your everyday life, then I guess the truth isn't an important part of your everyday life. And if it isn't important to you, than

how are you going to throw off the persistent lies and errors of our day? If we are not informed in our faith and embrace it tightly, the world from without can weaken our resolve to live the demands of the Gospel. In fact, there have been those who have said that the Catholic Church could be conquered not by arguing or reasoning, but by perverting the morals of the people. These people said that once this happens, then people will find their religion unpleasant and inconvenient, and they will no longer want to hear or think of their faith and will no longer believe in God. Now who here would say that over the past few decades, this idea hasn't met with a certain amount of success?

But because of this what are the results? Wise and strong men and women become broken, families torn apart, hearts corrupted, and an insane bitterness takes the place of a sense of peace and well being. Such souls, when they are unable to throw off the infamous burden they carry, will begin to avoid the church, or even rise up against her. And this is so sad because I cannot believe that a single human being would not long for the greatest happiness possible, which is found when we are with God.

If then we want this happiness, then we must not accept any distorted truths that the world may have to offer, but instead we must accept the truth that Christ has to offer us. Those who seek the truth hear his voice. This is how Christ reigns, with truth and love. So if we seek truth, then what we seek is for Christ to reign over us. When we truly seek that, it can have a transformative effect on us. It changes us and our lives in a better way which frees us up to do the good that we long to do. This feast of Christ the King is supposed to remind us of that. It is supposed to remind us of how important it is for us to align ourselves with the one who is truly lord and king of all because living in the truth is so much better than the alternative. Living in truth is what brings us the victory of happiness and freedom. Living in truth helps us realize that Jesus Christ truly is our king.

Fr. Paul Ballien
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