

Christ the King

November 18, 2021

In the movie “C. S. Lewis, the Most Reluctant Convert” there is a discussion among Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson on Christ. Lewis, at that time a young atheist asserts that Jesus was a good man. Is that the way we view Christ, a good man – nice and like all those other good men. He said some interesting things that we can take or leave. We can have a smorgasbord of ideas. I will have a little of Jesus, you know those easy sayings about mercy. Didn't he say everyone is going to heaven??

Well maybe that was someone else. Maybe I will add in a little bit of Eastern spirituality because I want to feel spiritua-l- even if I do not go to Church. I like that warm cozy feeling. The good thing about that warm cozy feeling is you can feel like you are in control. Until you realize you are not.

Tolkien, a good Catholic, and Dyson, a committed Christian, counter with different perspectives – a view that would lead to Lewis's later conversion. Tolkien and Dyson would talk to Lewis along the Addison's Walk in Oxford. There is something about reflecting on the universe, on God with friends on a quiet nature walk. The question they posed is inferred in Pilate's question to Jesus in today's Gospel.

When Jesus says, in effect I am a king but my kingdom is not of this world, he gives us only two choices. Either he is a king or he is crazy. No one facing certain death would tell his judge, the man who holds his life in his hands, that he is a king but his kingdom is not of this world unless he is either a king or crazy. How does Pilate respond, is this man a threat to Rome? Will the Jewish leaders stir up a riot if I do not crucify this man. Jesus could have said hey I am a good man but just misunderstood. But he did not. He said my kingdom is not of this world. Later Pilate would place an inscription on Jesus's cross, “The King of the Jews”

Pilate would not have understood that this was true but that Jesus was so much more. Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ, the King of the Universe. His kingdom is not of this world, he is not a secular materialistic king. His kingdom includes the people of the world but he is the king of the whole universe. He is the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity.

It took C. S. Lewis a time to come to grips with the question we are all faced with; can I superficially treat Jesus as one of a number of good people. I'll have two ideas from Jesus, one idea from Cicero and maybe a little of Edmund Burke. But if Christ is either crazy or the King of the Universe. We are faced with a difficult choice.

There are those troublesome miracles, and rising from the dead, and all of his followers were willing to die to spread his message. For approximately the first 300 years of the Church, every Pope was martyred. These witnesses obviously believed. If we acknowledge that Christ is the son of God then everything changes. He is not crazy. He is so much more than nice or good. As Lewis realized, Jesus is the Son of God. This bright Oxford professor was transformed. He became a different man. Christ as God would become the theme in his Christian lectures, radio broadcasts and writings such as “Mere Christianity”.

The Solemnity of Christ the King of the Universe is a pivot between Ordinary Times and Advent. A pivot between a time of reflection on miracles and parables and teaching and a time of anticipation. If we look back at Ordinary Times, do we accept that these lessons from the Gospels come from the King of the Universe? If we look forward, do we anticipate a time of family cheer and presents at Christmas or the time to welcome the King of the Universe into our hearts?

C. S. Lewis realized that Jesus Christ was the King of the Universe and his life was never the same. His writing would influence our faith and his allegories, such as the *Chronicles of Narnia*, would help us to learn the gift of the Son. We may think he lived this idyllic country life like in *All Creatures Great and Small* or *Morse*, but I have a xeroxed copy of one of his radio broadcasts that he had hand typed. It had all the edits he hurriedly made because his broadcast was shortened by the blitz.

In some ways, our choice should be obvious. Do we accept that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of the Universe? As Tolkien reminded Lewis, the only other choice is to believe that he is some sort of crazy man. We are not really left with a third option that he is just a nice guy.

If we accept Jesus Christ as the King of the Universe as our personal king, then our only worthwhile goal in life is to be with Him.

This Thursday we celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was instituted as a celebration by the Pilgrims who were finally seeing some progress after several years of famine, disease and hardship. They instituted this holy day to thank God. The day is not really about turkey and stuffing and stuffing ourselves. For some of us the only prayer is that the Lions will win. We should be in awe that the King of the Universe chose to love us. Chose to show us mercy and forgiveness. Chose to be our brother. This is the reason that we should be truly thankful. Yes, health, safety and all the material gifts are nice, but let us be thankful that God chose to create us and that the King of the Universe offers to be our brother. Today's Gospel reminds us to focus on who Jesus is.

In cycle A of the Sunday readings we have Chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel, the judgment of the Nations. This Gospel reminds us to focus on how we should live to be united with Christ. We are reminded that we are judged on how we treat the least among us. In a way, this is a reminder of the Beatitudes. First, Jesus tells us that we are blessed with certain virtues and then He tells us that the blessing is the gift of eternal life.

We are brothers and sisters of the King of the Universe. Let us bring that comfort to those in need and let us be thankful that we are all brothers and sisters of Christ, the greatest of our blessings.

~Dcn. Jerry