



The Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, recently greeted us yet again. In the midst of the dark and cool days of late November, **the Church brings us to the feet of our King, to offer Him our love, homage, and devotion. At His feet, we can renew our solemn and heartfelt recognition of Christ as King, not only of the Church, but also of the whole world, even the universe.**

The timing couldn't be better. As we notice around us in the fading colors of Autumn the increasing evidence of natural decay and death, we are reminded of our own mortality. In the greater scheme of things, whether we are young or old, our passing and judgement will be soon. **It is Christ, our King, who will judge us at that fateful hour.**

The theme of Christ as Judge is not one limited to this feast, however. It is a central element to the season Advent as well. Hence, the doubly good timing of the feast of Christ's Kingship.

As its name suggests, **Advent beckons us to reflect upon the coming of Christ.** Because Advent ends with Christmas, it is rather easy to fix our attention on the coming of Christ as a child in Bethlehem. We are undoubtedly right to do so. But Advent focuses just as much on another coming of Christ: His coming as Judge at the end of time. This theme is especially apparent in the first two weeks of Advent, before December 17th, when the Church turns all of the intensity of her attention upon Christ's coming in the flesh.

To be judged by Christ is perhaps a fearful thing to ponder. One day, each of us will stand before the King of the Universe, in all of His majesty and glory, and render his account. This is indeed a fearful prospect and there is nothing wrong with acknowledging that. Our modern sensibilities are trained to reject this fear and call it wrong-headed, but we must learn to resist that bad habit. Anyone who tries to completely remove this fear from the Christian account of life and death is simply wrong. Our Lord himself speaks of death and judgement in the Gospels and it is clear that He takes the matter seriously and that we ought to do so as well.

But fear is by no means the end of the story. Christ is not a King who is far off and unknown. Besides the two comings mentioned above- Christ's birth in the flesh and His coming at the end of the time- there is a third coming: His coming in grace. To each soul who is in the state of grace, Christ comes with all of His majesty and splendor. If you are in the state of grace, Christ reigns in your soul. It is His delight to do so. Among the many aspirations which might fill us if we dwell on this truth, joy reigns supreme. We can rejoice that Christ reigns in us, and we can rejoice in His reign over the Universe. We can rejoice to be His subjects and be counted among those who happily swear their allegiance to the King of Love. It is ultimately One who knows us as 'the apple of His eye' who stands as sovereign and judge over our souls.

God works in silence. When Christ came in the flesh, His presence was recognized by very few. One day, His kingship will be recognized by all, whether they wish to or not, to their rejoicing or lament. In the meantime, His reign in our souls is quiet and almost hushed, perhaps known to few others besides ourselves. What is more, many live deliberately outside of His reign. Many others know nothing of our King.

We must not let the seeming absence of Christ's reign in the world discourage us or sap our singular joy in His reign within us, however quiet that reign may seem. This Advent, **Christ the King can give us a deeper joy in the knowledge of His reign, both now and even in its glorious manifestation to all at the end of time.** This Advent, we can pray and hope that when He does come for us we will be so blessed as to be found, at least in our hearts, adorning the sweet and gentle babe, who is the royal Lamb of God.