

Ask Fr James

What is the Biblical meaning of the Kingship of Christ?

Every year, on the last Sunday of the Liturgical year, Catholics all over the world celebrate the Solemnity of Christ as King. We often wonder if this means that we are celebrating Christ as we celebrate the world's royalties and monarchs. What the church celebrates is Jesus the "Son of God" which means that he is "like" God. Being like-God, Jesus embodies the Father's nature.

To be a 'king' is the very purpose of Jesus' mission in the world. In John 12:1-11 Mary anointed the feet of Jesus using pure nard which was often used to anoint kings. She recognized Jesus as king; son of God. At the feeding of the five thousand, the people desired to make Jesus their king (John 6:14-15). That Jesus withdrew from the people does not deny his kingship. Jesus' role as king is not about a physical kingship but a spiritual matter because Jesus' kingdom is not of this world.

Jesus clarified the above statement to Pilate at his trial. Pilate had asked Jesus; "Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:28-38). Jesus tells Pilate; "My kingdom is not of this world." This response of Jesus expresses Jesus' purpose for coming into this world. God's people were in moral decay. They had completely lost what true covenant relationship was all about. Pilate then inquires about Jesus' origin. "Where do you come from?" The question is relevant since "the origin of Jesus' kingship corresponds to his own origin."

After his crucifixion, Pilate writes a sign over his head - The sign proclaims Jesus' kingship to all the world. His Kingship sign written over his head on the cross was written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek, the language of religion, government and culture. In doing this, John (19:19) is telling the readers that Jesus is not only the "King of the Jews," but that his kingship extends beyond the Jews to the rest of the world. The sign, therefore, acts as a prophecy, declaring to the world that the event on the cross is a universal event. Jesus is not only the king of the Jews, but he is also the whole world. The whole message of the gospels is to help us to the understanding of Jesus being 'lifted up' so that the crucifixion is seen as the enthronement of Jesus.

You may email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he will answer them in our Sunday Bulletins.