

Christ the King
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Today is
Christ the King Sunday.
It's not a loud festival,
so much as it is
a bridge from what
we call ordinary time
to the beginning
of the new Christian year
and Advent.

David Morrison says
The celebration
of Christ the King Sunday
"comes the Sunday
before Advent
for a couple of reasons.

Advent, as we know,
looks forward
not only to Jesus' birth,
but also to
His Second Coming.

Christ the King Sunday
teaches us that we
do not, have to wait
until His Coming
in Glory
to make Jesus King.

He is King NOW,
among us His people,
those of us birthed
into his kingdom
by the waters of baptism,
compelled by
his reign in our lives
to serve our king
by serving his subjects

Before next Sunday,
When begin anew
the season of Advent,
The intentional time
of waiting for
the next coming of our king

we have this last
Sunday of the Sundays
that follow Pentecost.

This last day to consider
what it means that
Christ is indeed our king.

We are not a people
used to proclaiming kingship.
We are fiercely independent
Democratic, self directing
Individuals
who don't often
stop to think about
who really rules **the** world,
or our lives.

Some have even asked,
Isn't calling Christ a
"King" antiquated
and oppressive?

The answer given
by author David Bennet
is no.

If nothing else, he says,
"Christ the King Sunday
has a much better
ring to it than
"Christ our Democratically
Elected Leader Sunday."

But also, he says, "all joking aside,
despite the success
and value of a democratic
form of government
for *secular* affairs,
the Kingdom of Heaven
is not a democracy.

God does not
take opinion polls,
nor can he be recalled
or voted out of office.

And this is actually
a good thing,
Because we are not dealing
With an unjust

and petty dictator,
but a loving and just king,
who is both God and man.”

It is this
loving and just king
Who has a claim on us.

It is Christ who is
the sovereign for all
who have been baptized
into his kingdom,
baptized into his life
and death and resurrection.

And although his reign
is full of glory
it is not what
we would make it.

It is not a kingdom
or a kingship
of our making or design.

He's not running the world
The way we might,
And he hasn't
since his beginning.

I'd wager to say that
If we were handed
the keys to the kingdom,
we might make a few changes.

My own daughter Kat
was asked to write an essay
for her fifth grade class
about what she would do
as ruler of the universe.

Here's what she
had in mind as the
imaginary king.

If I were in charge of the world,
I'd get rid of guns, Mondays,
bugs and also liars.

If I were in charge of the world,
there'd be more pancakes,
more crafts, more holidays and no homework.

If I were in charge of the world,
you wouldn't have TVs,
wars, robberies and there would not be dirt.

If I were in charge of the world,
a milkshake would be a vegetable,
books would never end,
and someone not always nice,
and who used to have lice,
would still be allowed
to be in charge of the world.

As a mother I applaud
her creative writing
and even most of her ideals,
but as a priest and person
of the world I know
what you know.

Christ is not
that kind of king

He is more
the kind of king
who spends meal times
with sinners
and heals those
who are lost
and in the way
and even in the wrong.

He is the kind of king
who rewards those
who follow him
with a promise
that loyalty may earn
them nothing
but persecution
and separation
from the world.

The king of king
who puts the lowly
where the lofty sit
and brings the least of us
to the front of the line
at the kingdom's gate.

He is the kind of king
who can stare at

the ugly truth
that his kingdom
in this world
is full of those who are
awful and imperfect
and still make
the painful sacrifice
required to bring them
into the fullness
of his kingdom
in the next world.

Jesus is the kind of king
who finds himself,
unfairly hanging
on the criminal's cross
between two
who deserve to be there.

The kind of king
who would not only
show mercy to a
penitent robber dying
next to him,
but promise him
companionship in paradise.

This is what the Poet
Denise Levertov calls
“the promise given
from cross to cross at noon.”

Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes
Writes daily for the
Unfolding Light Network.
His imaginative words
capture the Kingship
of Jesus.

“What kind of king
might this be,
naked and in agony,
defeated and vulnerable,
without a land or an army,
without dignity or power?

What kind of king is he,
who will not save himself,
who will allow scoundrels
to take the life
right out of him,

and spend himself
for the unworthy?

What Realm does he rule,
and what is his law,
and how will he enforce it?
How will he provide
for his people and defend his land?
What manner
of king might this be?

He is the King of Forgiveness,
and his grace is supreme.
He imposes
his imperial mercy
upon all who are
broken and in need.
He establishes forgiveness
with absolute power;
it is a law that
no one can break....

He is my king,
the King of Forgiveness.
I bow to him,
and I will obey his command,
and I will follow
him into life.

Jesus, our merciful
and forgiving king
was not wealthy
or famous
or universally liked.

He did not promise wealth
or fortune or fame.

He was crowned king
at his death
and he left his followers
only the mystery
and salvation
of water and bread
and wine.

The food of his
body and blood
to strengthen and sustain us
and the waters of baptism
to birth us and others

into the life and promise
of his kingdom.

It is truly fitting
that on this day
we celebrate the
Reign of Christ
with the baptism
of baby Mary Jane
Fullencamp.

As we share in the vows
made on her behalf
we will strengthen and renew
our own vows
of fealty to our king.

We will share in the sacrificial
supper of his love
and pray for day
of his new kingdom's coming.
May Christ the king
live in your heart
And rule your life
this day and always. Amen.