



November 23, 2025

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

Colossians 1:15



Dear Friends,

There is an old philosophical principle that says, *"The first thing one thinks of, is the last thing to happen."* For example, you may think of a cake. But it is only after gathering the ingredients, mixing, and baking that you get a cake. It is with this type of reasoning that Franciscan theology understands what is being said in our reading from the Letter to the Colossians.

The Franciscans say that the first thing that came to the mind of God was the Incarnate Son. Jesus is the model or pattern that God used when creating the cosmos. God thinks of Jesus first and in the course of time Jesus is born. So, in Jesus all other created things whether visible or invisible, in the sky or on the earth came to be. They are the ingredients gathered to reveal the Christ who is head of the body of the Cosmos and the Church.

Jesus is God's first idea. The Son is the preeminent energy creating, reconciling, and uniting all things in himself. This is a universal process. God desires to save the universe not just a handful of escapees. Too often Christians think of Jesus as God's second thought, a type of plan B. But the Letter to the Colossians insists he is the first thought. Jesus the Incarnate One is the pattern for a world where the glory of God shines through.

This is a collective vision for the future. We are made in God's likeness, animated with the divine spark. Disciples of Christ are not working merely for their individual salvation. We work for the salvation of all creation. Christianity is a universalist movement. We are not only concerned with saving human beings, but the biosphere and the whole cosmos. We need the conscious realization that everyone and everything is connected in the web of God's design. It is not "Me and Jesus," but "We and Jesus."

Today, our feast speaks of Jesus by a title he shunned during his earthly ministry, king. *"Messiah," "Christ," "Anointed," "Son of God," "Son of David"* were all titles used to refer to the kings of ancient Judah. But in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) Jesus avoids these titles when people use them, or when the demons shout them out. The title Jesus uses to speak of himself is *"Son of Man."* In other words, *"human like you."*

In his trial the enemies of Jesus accuse him of usurping the title of "king." This puts him at odds with the brutal authority of Imperial Rome. Under that boot the people of Palestine struggled. And he was charged with sedition (undermining the moral and legal authority of Rome). He is executed by crucifixion. Over his head a sign reads *"This is the King of the Jews."*

He is an unusual king. He does not seek revenge, but rather he forgives those who wronged him. His throne is a cross from which he dispenses the medicine of mercy, *"Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing."* His divine power is expressed in the promise to a criminal crucified next to him, *"today you will be with me in Paradise."* As in the Letter to the Colossians, this promise recalls the authority God has given Jesus as the pattern of all that exists. Jesus leads us to paradise which is God's vision for our future.

This feast of Christ the King was established for the whole Church in 1925 by Pius XI during the first rise of fascism. It challenges us to resist all who threaten human dignity and the sacredness of creation. *¡Viva Cristo Rey!*

Peace,

Fr Ron

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