

SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

By Al Mansfield

2 Samuel 5:1-3

Psalm 122

Colossians 1:12-20

Luke 23:35-40

KING OF KINGS

During the events surrounding the death and funeral of Queen Elizabeth of England, we all got a sense of the pageantry and tradition connected with a monarchy. Today, we honor and celebrate Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, infinitely exalted above all earthly rulers and potentates. We can never honor and praise him enough!

2 SAMUEL

David was anointed king three times. The first time, as a mere youth, he was tending sheep when he was selected and anointed by Samuel over his seven brothers (cf. 1 Samuel 16).

The second time, he was anointed to be king of Judah by the men of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4). This was after the death of Saul, the first king of Israel.

Our first reading today describes David's third anointing as king of all the tribes of Israel, recognizing his divine selection and anointing to rule. David ruled approximately 40 years - 7 1/2 in Hebron and 33 in Jerusalem.

As we celebrate Christ the King today, we are reminded that Jesus is a descendant of David. At the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel said, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

GOSPEL

Throughout this liturgical year we have been reading from the gospel of Luke. We have noted a number of times when Luke includes incidents or episodes that the other gospels do not. Today's gospel is an example - the account of the Good Thief. Only Luke records the interaction between the two thieves and Jesus at the crucifixion.

There are several references in this narrative to Jesus as king. First, from the soldiers: "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." Then, there is the inscription on the cross that read: "This is the King of the Jews." Finally, the Good Thief, traditionally called Dismas, says: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

The last words of today's gospel are the best possible words anyone could ever hope to hear: "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." As has been pointed out, he was the first saint - canonized by Jesus himself!

COLOSSIANS

Our second reading is from Colossians. St. Paul addresses our deliverance and transfer from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Jesus, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." The emphasis here is on Jesus as Savior of the world.

Paul then proclaims the pre-eminence of Christ in one of the most beautiful and powerful passages in Scripture. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation." He is the Pantocrator - all things being

created in him, through him and for him. St. Paul also emphasizes that Christ is firstborn from the dead and the head of his body, the Church.

Finally, St. Paul refers to Jesus' power to "reconcile all things, making peace by the blood of his cross."

JESUS CHRIST, LORD AND KING

Jesus, the Son of God come in the flesh, is like a multi-faceted diamond - exceedingly, exquisitely beautiful from every viewpoint!

He is Savior, Redeemer, Shepherd - saving, healing, and reconciling us to the Father.

He is Messiah - the anointed Anointer, who breathes forth the Holy Spirit into our midst.

He is Lord of Lords and King and Kings - the Son of David, whose kingdom will never end.

All praise, honor and glory to Jesus Christ, the Supreme King of the Universe!