



A Reflection on the Feast of Christ the King

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*A reflection by Sr Michelle, fcJ,
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Living in God's Kingdom, Now

A few years ago, I listened to a homily given, primarily, to a group of elementary school children. It was a diverse group, to be sure, and not of an age where they could have handled any complicated theological teaching and so the priest speaking to the students stuck with this message: God loved them, God was All-Powerful and if they prayed to him, God would always take care of them.

It seems, on the surface, like a fairly stock message to deliver to a group of young people attending a Catholic school. Certainly, we know that God does love us, and we all have at least some sense of the importance of prayer. And yet, I remember feeling uneasy with the talk because it left so many things unsaid. It failed to approach even the child-sized complexities of life. If God takes care of us in the way the person seemed to be implying, how then to explain the difficult experiences that cropped up in the course of any normal childhood: things like the death of a pet or bullying by other students or parental divorce? In such cases, would we suggest to kids, or to anyone else, that the reason these things happen is due to their lack of prayer?

At the end of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Feast Day of Christ the King. It is my favourite of the year and has had a special meaning to me ever since I participated in a 30 Day Spiritual Retreat as a Novice. However, remembering Christ as King needs a bit of nuancing. I don't imagine Jesus as some version of [Aragorn](#) from [Lord of the Rings](#), battling my 'enemies' and keeping me safe from all harm. Nor does my idea of King Jesus involve dazzling vestments, ruby studded crowns, or a massive army reinforcing his every decree. I've lived enough life to know that taking prayers to God are not a kind of magic cure to ensure that everything that I'm hoping happens does. Life is messy and challenging at times, no matter how much I pray.

So in what way do I see Christ as a King? John's Gospel says of Jesus the Christ: *All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.* These beautiful words resonate with me deeply. In paraphrasing them, I might say that all of us, just by virtue of coming into existence, bear the imprint of Jesus in our being. Our bodies, our cells, our very atoms are all carefully crafted by God to carry God's Essence, God's Light, God's Fragrance. So, in what way is Christ the King of this world? This world and everything that is in it utterly belongs to and is integrally marked by God.

When I pray, it is not because I'm worried that if I don't pray enough, God won't do what I want God to do. Instead, I pray so that I have a better sense of my connection to that inner Essence of Christ that I have inherited. When I am grounded in that Essence, I can move through my days aware of the countless ways that God is at work in the people around me, rather than being transfixed

by the hurtful ways we can treat each other. When I am grounded in that Essence, I can experience the dark and painful 'Gethsemane' events in my life prepared to look for any of the many 'angels' that God sends to minister to me, rather than supposing myself to be alone, forgotten by God and the world.

Jesus told the Pharisees that *the kingdom of God is among you*. Recognizing Jesus as my King helps me to recognize the truth of His words: we are living in God's kingdom, now. There are miracles and graces happening all around us, now. God is sending us 'angels' in disguise to love and support us, now. In the moments or days (or weeks) that we struggle to see this, we can enter into prayer and ask God to open our eyes to these truths. As we celebrate the Feast Day of Christ the King this month, let us pray that we deepen in our sense of connection to that inner Essence of God that is integrally part of us. May we recognize that we are truly living in God's Kingdom and that Christ is King. Now.



“ Never give way to discouragement, for it will be our ruin. Courage and confidence! Let that be your motto. (1837) ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

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