



# The Holy Spirit Province NEWSLETTER



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## CELEBRATING JESUS CHRIST OUR KING: YEAR B

Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:5-8; John 18:33b-37

When we think of a king, we tend to think of a throne, a crown, a palace, glittering robes and decorations, great wealth, power, and prestige, armed forces protecting him, and people bowing and kneeling before him.

But when we think of Jesus as king, what do we see? He has no throne, crown, robes, palace, or soldiers. We see him walking the dusty roads of Palestine with a little band of disciples. He is surrounded by the poor and the sick, by sinners, outcasts, and rejects - the struggling and the broken. In short, he is surrounded by the kind of people who would never get inside the gates of a palace today, let alone talk to a king or queen.

Jesus, then, is a different kind of king, and yet we don't hesitate to say of him that 'Jesus is Lord,' to call him the 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords,' and to honour him as 'our King' and 'the king of the whole wide world.'

But even before God the Father raised Jesus from the dead and crowned him with glory and honour and a place at his right hand, he was already a king, as he assures Pilate in our gospel today. In the darkness of his own time and world, he was an endless source of light, goodness, and love. People were drawn to him, because they sensed that he had authority and influence, and could make things happen for the better. Over and over again, his kind and generous heart went out to the poorest, most vulnerable, and most wounded people of his day. So much so, that whenever he saw a wrong, there and then he wanted to right it. So consistently courageous and compassionate was he, that he remains our inspiration - your king and mine.

Contrast the leadership of Jesus to that of some tyrants of recent times, such as Saddam Hussein, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Robert Mugabe. One of the features of their iron control was their 'cult of personality.' All over the place, they put up pictures or statues of themselves, that turned them into idols. But in the eyes of their people, they stood for oppression, cruelty, and terror. So, when at long last their evil regimes collapsed, the first thing people did was to pull down those idols and smash them to pieces.

In the years when Communism was collapsing in Europe, *Time* magazine published a touching picture, taken in the Ukraine, once a Russian satellite state. It showed a group of people gathered in prayer around a simple altar in a public place. On their altar was a statue of Jesus that said it all. The idols have been toppled, and Jesus the Messiah-King is back in his rightful place.

What a contrast between his rule and the rule of the idols! The idols command; Jesus invites. The idols rule through fear; Jesus rules through love. The idols bring oppression and death;

Jesus brings freedom and life. His kingship is about truth and honesty, integrity and generosity, self-sacrifice and service, understanding and mercy, forgiveness and care. So, with grateful hearts we give him our sincere allegiance, loyalty, love and service.

The rule of Christ is made up of all those things we long for – all that is right and true, all that is beautiful, just, and good. Our Preface for the feast today calls it ‘a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace.’

Our King Jesus doesn’t need or want soldiers and tanks. But he does need witnesses, people who are ready to stand up for justice, truth, peace, kindness, compassion and care. Both out there and within ourselves, one big struggle still goes on between the reign of darkness and the reign of light, between the reign of lies and the reign of truth, between the rule of nastiness and malice, and the rule of acceptance and respect, love and care.

On which side are we? To whom do we belong? To whom are we attached? Who has our lasting loyalty and love? You and I know where we stand. So today, with the help of his ‘amazing grace’, let us renew our loyalty and allegiance to Jesus - our King, and the King of the whole world! Let’s make that commitment now, make it from our hearts, and make it real!

May the passion of Jesus Christ and his everlasting love be always within our minds and hearts!

[bgleesoncp@gmail.com](mailto:bgleesoncp@gmail.com)