

34th Sunday Christ the King A reflection

Pope Pius XI established today's feast in 1925, ordaining that it be celebrated on the last Sunday of October. In 1969 Pope Paul VI transferred it to the last Sunday of the liturgical year, thus linking it to Christ's second coming.

Each of us has been anointed with chrism at baptism, the symbolic expression that the newly baptized shares in Jesus' threefold role of priest, prophet, and king. Thus today's feast can encourage us to reflect on our participating in these roles of Christ, especially his kingly role.

St John Paul II commented in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*: "one element that seems to stand out amid all the riches of the Christian vocation is its sharing in Christ's kingly mission." Kingship, therefore, is the "special dignity of our vocation." This dignity, paradoxically, is expressed in our readiness to serve, in keeping with the example of Christ, who "came not to be served but to serve." John Paul II continued, "kingly service asks of us that we faithfully do what we have been called to do by God's grace to fulfill our vocation in life."

In the daily journey of discovery of service we are living out our vocation, and honouring Christ the King. In Jesus' service we also have a role, totally subordinate to him, and as his gift, of building the Kingdom for we read in Vatican II's document, *Church in the Modern World* 39,

After we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, *we will find them again, but free of stain, burnished and transfigured*. This will be so when Christ hands over to the Father a kingdom eternal and universal: "a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace." [Preface of the Feast of Christ the King.]

The striking thought is that our good works have a deeper meaning than that of means to an end. They will belong to the end for "we will find them again, but free of stain, burnished and transfigured."

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