

This Solemnity of Christ the King is somewhat ... **ironic** ... considering that Jesus spent most of His life rejecting the whole **idea** of being a king! When the people **wanted** to make him a king ... He **hid**! When Satan offered Him **all** the kingdoms of the world ... Jesus refused and rebuked him. And, of course ... **King** ... is **not** a word we normally use for someone born in a **stable**. Jesus did **not** live a kingly life and ... He did not die a kingly **death**. The crucifixion certainly seems a very un-kingly end ... to a very un-king-like life. The people jeered at him ... the soldiers mocked him ... His closest followers abandoned Him. Bystanders **joked** about Jesus being a king. His painful and humiliating death was just a grotesque public **entertainment**.

And yet ... we celebrate the Kingship of Christ. The feast was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 ... recent ... in the long history of our Church. So **why** ... would he initiate this celebration of the **Kingship** of Christ ... of all things ... especially at a time when kings and other monarchs were beginning to become irrelevant? It was a **time** ... when people ... and indeed nations ... were adopting new social orders and new values ... **rejecting** Jesus.

Coming out of one of the worst wars in human history, the **victors** of this ... “*war to end wars*” ... had imposed harsh reparations on the vanquished ... planting seeds that would **ensure** another war ... far worse ... would soon come. Anarchy, secularism and totalitarianism were the order of the day in a world where Stalin ... Mussolini and Hitler were ... or soon would be in power ... scoffing at God and ruling by the principle that **government** was supreme and ... had the sole claim on people’s loyalty. Even the government of that most **Catholic** of countries ... Mexico ... would declare war on the Church ... and on God!

The pope explained: "With God excluded from political life... human

society is tottering to its fall, because it has no longer a secure and solid foundation." The idea behind this feast ... then ... was to emphasize that no **ruler** ... no **state** ... no **political** party ... can claim our hearts; only God ... only **Jesus Christ** is Lord of all. He must come **first** in all areas of our lives and thus is ... for want of a better term ... **king**! The pope said, in essence: "No, the state is **not** the highest authority. **God** is!"

But ... that was then! How relevant is this feast today? Nazism fell. Fascism fell in Italy. Communism failed in Russia and Eastern Europe. Even China is becoming more like the west! Thanks to God ... you and I do not yet live under such a regime. We **still** enjoy religious freedom.

And yet ... even after the repeal of Roe v Wade ... in our recent election ... people ran ... and, indeed, were elected campaigning in support of denying the God-given right to life itself ... for the unborn. Several states now permit doctors to provide **suicide** drugs to the terminally ill. And in our War on **Terror** ... our government adopted a practice it had heretofore **condemned** in other nations ... the torture of prisoners.

No ... we do **not** live in a totalitarian country. In our Pledge of Allegiance we **still** state that we are one nation "**under** God" a phrase that would seem to **acknowledge** that God is the ultimate authority. Americans say the words ... but how many ... I wonder ... still believe them? The socio-political climate of one hundred years ago is **very** different than that of today, but the need for Christ's rule is greater than ever, as we confront the evils of today and ... those evils tomorrow will bring. And when governments overreach themselves ... as it seems governments must ... when they demand what we cannot in conscience give; what will be our response? Yes, we must **try** to be good citizens, but ultimately ... we do **not** belong to governments. We belong to **God** ... **alone** and **Christ** is our king!