

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe! This feast day closes the liturgical

Christ the King

1. The Earthly King: David (2 Samuel 5:1-3)

- **The King as Shepherd:** The Israelites recognize David as "your bone and your flesh" and, most importantly, as the one who will "**shepherd my people Israel.**" This sets up the ideal of an earthly king: a leader who is **one with his people** (kinship) and who **cares for them** (shepherding).
 - **Connection to Christ:** Jesus is often called the **Son of David**. This foretells Christ's kingship, but ultimately shows its limitations. David's kingdom was earthly; Christ's is eternal and universal. In 10 The Good Shepherd
 - **Catholic Teaching Point:** God establishes leadership to guide and care for His people. This theme of **shepherding** is foundational to the Church's understanding of ministry, especially the role of the Pope and bishops.
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2. The Universal King: Christ's Supremacy (Colossians 1:12-20)

- **Cosmic Kingship:** This reading from St. Paul's letter is arguably the most theologically dense and central to the feast. It shifts the focus from an earthly throne to a cosmic one. Christ is described using powerful titles:
 - **"Image of the invisible God":** Jesus perfectly reveals who God is.
 - **"Firstborn of all creation":** He existed before all things and is the source of all things.
 - **"In him were created all things":** Everything—visible and invisible, including spiritual powers ("thrones or dominions")—was made **through him and for him.**
- **The Head of the Church:** Christ is the "**head of the body, the church.**" This highlights that His kingship is exercised specifically through His relationship with His people—the Church.
- **Reconciliation and Peace:** His kingship is not about conquest but about **reconciliation** ("making peace by the blood of his cross"). He reigns by redeeming, not dominating.

- **Catholic Teaching Point:** This passage defines Christ's **divinity** and **universal dominion**. We are "**transferred... to the kingdom of his beloved Son**"—this transfer happens through **Baptism**, which delivers us from the "**power of darkness**" (sin) and grants us forgiveness and a share in the "**inheritance of the holy ones.**"
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3. The Crucified King: Power in Suffering (Luke 23:35-43)

- **The Paradoxical Throne:** The Gospel presents the ultimate paradox: Christ's throne is the **Cross**. The sign above his head says, "**This is the King of the Jews,**" but this is stated in mockery. Earthly rulers and soldiers demand He "**save himself**"—the ultimate expression of worldly power.
 - **A Kingdom of Service:** Jesus refuses to use his power to save himself. His kingship is shown in a supreme act of **self-giving and service**. He is the King who reigns from a place of vulnerability and humility.
 - **The Good Thief:** The encounter with the two criminals is the heart of the reading. The "Good Thief" (traditionally named Dismas) expresses a radical and profound faith. He doesn't ask to be saved from the cross but to be "**remembered... when you come into your kingdom.**" This is the moment a dying criminal recognizes the true nature of Christ's kingdom, one that begins not with a show of force, but in a moment of utter defeat.
 - **Christ's Final Royal Decree:** Jesus' reply, "**Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise,**" is His final royal decree on earth, granting the greatest gift of His kingdom: **salvation and immediate entrance into eternal life.**
 - **Catholic Teaching Point:** This is the Church's model of Christian kingship. **True authority is found in sacrificial love.** The Gospel teaches us that Christ's kingdom is **not of this world** (John 18:36) and that we follow Him not by seeking power, but by carrying our own crosses in imitation of Him.
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? Question 1: How do I let Christ be the "Head" in my own life?

The second reading calls Christ the "head of the body." To let Christ be King in your daily life means submitting the **various parts of your life** to Him, just as the body submits to the head.

- **Practical Reflection:**

- **In your decisions:** When faced with a choice (small or large), ask yourself: **"What would the King want me to do?"** (e.g., in how you spend your money, your time, or how you speak about others).
- **In your inner life:** Let Him reconcile the parts of your life that are in conflict (anger, anxiety, bitterness). The reading says He makes **"peace by the blood of his cross."** Bring your inner struggles to the Cross in prayer and ask Him to reign there.
- **In your community:** As the **"head of the body, the church,"** serving Christ means serving His body. Look for opportunities to serve others in your family, parish, or community, recognizing that you are serving the King through them.

? Question 2: How can I recognize Christ the King in unexpected places, like the Good Thief did?

The Good Thief saw a King on a cross, not on a throne. This teaches us that Christ's power is often hidden in **humility and suffering**.

- **Practical Reflection:**

- **In the poor and suffering:** Christ's face is often most visible in those who are marginalized, vulnerable, or suffering (Matthew 25:40: "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me"). Recognizing and serving them is how we acknowledge and serve the Crucified King today.
- **In your own suffering:** When you experience personal "crosses"—illness, setback, or disappointment—remember the Gospel. The King is not absent; He is reigning *from* a cross. Uniting your suffering to His is a profound way of declaring Him King, believing in His presence even when it seems like all is lost.
- **In the Eucharist:** The ultimate "hidden" King is in the **Holy Eucharist**. We believe the fullness of God dwells in the simple appearance of bread and wine. Adoring Him there is a central Catholic act of recognizing the King who reigns in humility.