**Jesus Christ: King of the Universe**

By Pedro Mendez

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe. This solemnity was decreed by Pope Pius XI in December 1925. This was a time in which *secularism* was beginning to rule human existence. Secularism is the ideology that leads humans to exclude God from one’s life, family, and all public areas of society. Pope Pius XI affirms right at the beginning of his Encyclical *Quas Primas* showing a sense of urgency: “These manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives.” Of course, Pope Pius was relating to all the evil suffered around his time. By establishing the Solemnity of Christ the King, he proclaims that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the One who must rule our lives, families, and all public areas of society so that we can have lasting peace, even amid of our suffering, challenges, and struggles.

By looking at the actual suffering all around the world, we might be tempted to think only about other people thrusting Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives into a global standpoint. However, it is also good to bring this topic to our lives here and now. *The contrary of thrusting Jesus and his holy law out of one’s life, family and society is to accept God’s invitation to share in his own divine life*. It is in this intimate sharing of God’s divine life in which the kingdom of God is established by its King: Jesus Christ. And Jesus rules God’s kingdom by shepherding its members.

*Thus, God shares his divine life when we allow Jesus Christ to shepherd us in the midst of our daily joys, sufferings, and struggles*. Jesus shepherds us essentially through his passion, death, and resurrection actualized in the Sacraments. He shepherds us by gathering us as His people—the Church—so that we, human beings wounded by sin, might hear His word, ponder it in our hearts and believe in it with our whole selves so that we can return to him to be saved. Jesus shepherds us by forming our conscience when we prayerfully read the Bible and the Doctrine of His Church. Jesus leads us to share God’s divine life, in the most intimate way, when we become one flesh with Him through His self-abandonment in His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. And Jesus shepherds us when we encounter him in prayer, in silence, in contemplation, and in our service to the most needed, especially the poor. Therefore, Jesus is the King who rules us by shepherding us so that we can participate in God’s divine life. This participation in God’s divine life impels us to extend Christ’s law everywhere by loving God, ourselves, our neighbor, and creation rightly.

Have we thrust Jesus and his holy law out of our lives, family, and society? Today’s solemnity is a good occasion to come to Jesus, the King of the Universe, and say: *“Lord Jesus, I am sorry for having thrust you and your holy law out of my life, family, and society. Come to my help and shepherd me so that I can participate in God’s divine life and, by doing so, I might experience, even in an imperfect way, the kingdom of God here and now.”* Then, Jesus might whisper in our ears the same words he addressed to one of the criminals in today’s gospel: “Amen, I say to you, today you will be in Paradise” (Luke 23: 43). This Paradise, the kingdom of God, can be experienced here and now as a foretaste of the everlasting joy in Heaven .Would you like to experience that? I would.