

**Feast of Christ the King
November 15 & 26, 17**

**Sr. Maureen D'Onofrio
All Saints Parish, Syr., NY**

Happy Feast of Christ the King! It's interesting to note that Pius the XI instituted this feast in 1925 to be celebrated in October but Pope Paul the VI revised the feast in 1969 from October to the last Sunday of the Church year in response to the rise of secularism, atheism and communism.

Of all the titles we could bestow on Jesus, that of “king” would seem to be the most inappropriate. It smacks of everything Jesus rejected. When we think of a king, we think of a throne, crown, palace, wealth, and prestige.

When we look at Jesus, what do we see? Nothing of a worldly king. We see him walking the dusty roads of Palestine with a little band of disciples who is supported by the poor, the sick, sinners, outcasts and widows who opened their homes to them. Obviously, by the kind of people who in worldly kingdoms are considered outcasts!

And yet, the title “king” is appropriate, and stands for all that is true and real in Jesus. It certainly stands for his divinity and on the human level, the title makes sense - Jesus was the source of goodness, light, and hope in a dark world. He had immense moral and spiritual authority by reason of the person he was.

Remarkable changes occurred to people when Jesus was in their midst. His presence changed beyond recognition the lives of those around him.

Jesus often spoke of the kingdom meaning the reign of God. The word “kingdom” appears more than any other word throughout the 4 gospels. In the Our Father at every liturgy we pray “thy kingdom come” meaning the reign of God come!

In reading on this feast in the booklet Living With Christ, Anthony Chezzi writes of how we live in a broken world – a Humpty Dumpty world! How many here remember the nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty from childhood? If so, say it with me “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again!” Today we would say men & women!

In the rhyme, Chezzi refers to all the king's men and women as people of science, economics, politics, technology and even religion as being unable to put Humpty together again. He goes on to write how only one King (referring to God as the Good Shepherd) can rescue sheep from areas where they've been scattered by disease, starvation, oppressive authority, war and the list goes on. At every baptism, we hear Fr. Fred proclaim to the one being baptized – that they are baptized as priest, prophet and king – called to share in the reign of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who seeks and rescues the lost sheep. We are the King's men and women putting Humpty together again – what did Jesus tell us? “Whatever you did for one of the least sisters and brothers of mine, you did for me!”

Our readings are so powerful this weekend! Psalm 23 is a psalm for all seasons and it accompanies the prophet Ezekial in the gospel of Matthew on this final Sunday of the Church year. We heard Ezekia, both as divine shepherd, seeking out and caring for the lost, and as divine judge administering justice to the flock in the final judgment. The Benedictine Abbot Gregory Polan in the booklet Give Us this Day points out how God's judgment of all nations can be related to the message of Ps. 23 and from Mt. 25 which says: *"I was hungry and you gave me food...Ps.23 - You have prepared a table before me"*Mt.25 *"I was thirsty and you gave me drink...Ps.23 Near restful waters he leads me" "You cared for me...There is nothing I shall want" "You visited me...No evil will I fear for you are with me..."*

Just as God shepherds us, we are called to shepherd one another. To me, Ps. 23 is like a prayer of trust. You and I live in a world of "do-it-yourself" - a world of self-sufficiency, so I have to ask myself, just how really strong is my trust in God? Do I truly trust God whole heartedly or only in times of crisis or disappointment... something for us to ponder and think about... or to use one of my favorite words – to "percolate" on.

Next Sunday, ushers in our Advent season – The First Sunday of our new church year...may it be a meaningful one for us here at All Saints with many opportunities to help us make it so.

I'd like to conclude with a quote in the booklet Living Faith by Sister Chris Koellhoffer who writes:

"How fitting that on this day of celebrating the Christ as the one who ushers in the reign of God, the dominant image in today's reading is that of shepherd: one who leads by accompaniment, who give rest to those exhaling a labored breath, who searches and brings home what was lost, who heals broken hearts and fragile spirits. Perhaps not the kind of kingdom we would have imagined, but surely the king of shepherding that is at the heart of God's reign."

Amen.