

11/25/2018 Bulletin Article

Christ the King. In December of 1925, Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King through his encyclical letter, *Quas Primas* (In the First). It was observed on Sunday, October 31, 1926 for the first time. Originally, Pius wrote this encyclical in response to the rising secularism and nationalism following the first World War. The war had seen the collapse of several royal dynasties including the Hohenzollerns, the Romanovs, and the Habsburgs, and as new forms of government came to power there was much anxiety and fear. The pope pointed to Christ the King, of whose kingdom there would be no end. We must always remember this first.

It went on to examine the understanding of both the Old and New Testament in regards to this kingship of Christ. Pius taught that as creator and redeemer of all people in the world, he was likewise owed allegiance by all as the king of the universe. He hoped that the feast would be a way to encourage the laity in the aftermath of the terrible war.

By acknowledging Christ as their king, people should then form their lives based on Christian ideals. God must be allowed to reign in one's mind, will, heart, and body. All these parts should serve as instruments of justice to God.

Originally celebrated on the last Sunday of October, the feast was changed to the last Sunday of the church year in 1970. At the same time it was raised to the level of a solemnity (the highest level of feasts in the church calendar) with the emphasis placed on the last things (death, judgement, heaven and hell).

Power comes and goes in our world. Kingdoms rise and fall. Yet, our ultimate protection will never be found by placing our trust in anything of this world. It is the Lord who won the victory for us over sin and death. Thus, he is the one to lead, the one to rule. Perhaps this best summed up in a hymn *To Jesus Christ, Our Sovereign King*, written by the late Mnsgr. Martin Hellriegel of St. Louis in 1941. He writes, "To Jesus Christ, our sovereign king, who is the world's salvation, all praise and homage do we bring and thanks and adoration. Christ Jesus, victor! Christ Jesus, ruler! Christ Jesus, Lord and redeemer!"

Father Jeff