

Homily based on the readings from November 23, 2025 (2 Samuel 5.1-3; Colossians 1.12-20; Luke 23.35-43)

Few of us here today, I think, have much firsthand experience with kings or queens. In this day and age, there are not many *bona fide* monarchies left. We may follow the news from Britain relating to the royal family, but – if we are being honest – that is mostly a show put on for the tourists. We might watch historical dramas relating to the Roman Empire or Medieval Europe, but we are separated from those events by continents and centuries. For some reason, though, the concept of *kingship* still resonates within our hearts. At some level, all of us are longing for the authority and protection of a king. The question is what *kind* of king, and what *impact* his reign will have on our own lives and on the wider world.

Today's first reading, from the Second Book of Samuel, presents a vision of kingship that is universally recognizable. After many years of conflict and division, the elders of Israel gathered in the city of Hebron

to anoint David, the son of Jesse, as their king. David's reign over the unified kingdom wound up lasting 33 years – a period that is usually considered the golden age of ancient Israel. Despite some serious missteps, David was a humble and obedient servant of the Lord – who labored tirelessly to ensure the peace and prosperity of his people. David went from being a *literal* shepherd – tending the sheep of his father's flock – to a wise and loving king, who shepherded Israel through countless difficulties and dangers. To prepare him for this awesome responsibility, David was anointed with holy oil – set aside and consecrated for this sole purpose. He became, according to the Hebrew terminology, a *messiah* – an anointed one – a title that would later be used to describe Jesus himself.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is also referred to as a king – but the circumstances could not be further from what David experienced.

Rather than being anointed as the heroic protector of his nation, Jesus is literally being murdered by his own people – in collaboration with a foreign invader. While many of his followers had expected a champion

in the model of David, what they got was a man who willingly accepted execution – flanked by a pair of common criminals. In contrast with the triumphant kingship of David, the inscription “This is the King of the Jews” must have seemed like a cruel joke. Nevertheless, through the suffering and death he endured, Jesus embodied an even more powerful form of kingship.

The most fundamental depiction of kingship, though, comes in our second reading – from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Colossians:

He is the image of the invisible God,

the firstborn of all creation.

For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth,

the visible and the invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers;

all things were created through him and for him.

He is before all things,

and in him all things hold together.

This portrayal of Christ, as one of the primal forces in the universe, is difficult to reconcile with what we saw in the Gospel. How could such a majestic being – who literally transcends all bounds of time and space – suffer such profound humiliation and agony? This paradox, of course, is the entire point. Any one of us – due to powers beyond our control – might wind up suffering a painful and degrading death. For Jesus Christ, however, this sacrifice was a voluntary choice. Not only did God himself take human form and dwell in our midst – he willingly died on the Cross to save us from our sins. He even allows us to consume his own Body and Blood – day after day, year after year – so that someday we can take our place as citizens in his eternal kingdom.

The reason the Church gives us these three readings is not so that we can select one over form of kingship over another. All of them are equally essential, and all are fully embodied by a single person – Jesus Christ himself. He protects us as we struggle through the toils and snares of this mortal world; he suffers and dies to wash away our sins; he reigns in

glorious majesty over the heavens and the earth. Christ truly is *all in all* – “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” We may not be accustomed to bending the knee before an earthly ruler, but all of us must joyfully bow down in the presence of our Risen Lord and Savior – the all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving King of the Universe.