

**Homily – The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe – San Fernando Cathedral – November 21, 2021**

Viva Cristo Rey! This was the rallying cry of the *Cristeros* in their struggle with the government of Mexico in the 1920's. Today we again proudly proclaim, Long live Christ the King!

Today's readings put our proclamation in proper perspective. The Book of Daniel was written in a time of crisis. The Jewish people were being forced to abandon their faith and embrace a pagan religion. Their hopes were boosted by the vision of a "son of man" whose "dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed." These are comforting words. They evoke our full trust in the power of God to overcome the forces of evil in every age.

The Book of Revelation was also written in a time of crisis for the early Christians who were suffering persecution in the powerful Roman Empire. John has a vision of "Jesus Christ...the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth . . . who has freed us from our sins by his blood. " Through the centuries Christians have stood with confidence before the Lamb – the gentle but triumphant Lamb of God who overcomes sin, the forces of evil, and death itself.

Today's gospel reminds us of the tremendous cost of our salvation as we stand with Jesus before Pilate. Pilate asks a political question: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus gives a theological answer: "My kingdom does not belong to this world." He then explains his mission: to testify to the truth. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is sentenced to death but rises on Easter.

Who belongs to the kingdom over which Jesus rules? Those who are open to the Spirit of Truth, those who clearly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow him. Jesus reveals God in his person, words, and actions. Jesus shows us the immense love of God when he stretches out his arms on the Cross to embrace the whole world. When we receive the truth of the gospel into our lives, we must give witness to our faith -- that we are all children of the one God, that we are all sisters and brothers in the Lord, that there are no exceptions. We must open the doors of the Church, Pope Francis tells us, to invite others to join us around the Lord's table. We are to open the doors of the Church to allow the risen Lord to go out with us and to embrace those whom we encounter who suffer and are persecuted or neglected or despised. We are to open the doors of our minds and hearts to reject racism, mean-spiritedness, hatred, revenge, violence. If we want truly and honestly to proclaim *Viva Cristo Rey!* we have to be reconciled with God and with others -- we need conversion of mind and heart and attitude -- we need to share God's love with the most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers from the unborn to those with terminal illness and everyone in between. Let us ask ourselves: Is Christ the Lord of my life? If you truly and honestly say yes, join me in proclaiming *Viva Cristo Rey!* Now let us truly live as missionary disciples of Christ the King!