

FROM THE PASTOR
NOVEMBER 26, 2023
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING
THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CHRIST THE KING

We come today to the Last Sunday of the Church's Year of Grace, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King. Next week when we come to Holy Mass, we will see the solemn and somber color of violet reminding us that we have placed our feet once more along the path of holiness as we begin a New Year of Grace on the First Sunday in Advent. The poet T.S. Eliot wrote in his wonderful poem *Ash Wednesday* that the Church journeys as a ship along the violet and violet of the seas. He was referring to one Advent following another.

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King is of relatively recent origin; it was established only in 1923, one hundred years ago. At that time an unprecedented persecution of the Church had begun both in Spain and in Mexico. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939 over 4,000 priests were killed in Spain and more than 20,000 religious sisters and brothers. Many were killed in terrible ways. Some were clubbed into unconsciousness and fed to the wild animals of the zoos. Among the many martyred religious were a great number of members of the Marianist Order who have served St. Paul's in such a dedicated and Christ-like way. And in Mexico churches were burned and many Catholics were tortured in unbelievable ways. This official persecution of the Church in Mexico lasted until 1992. Blessed Miguel Pro was executed before a firing squad for Christ the King on November 23, 1927. His dying words were *Viva Cristo Rey! Long live Christ the King!*

At that time then the Church established the Feast of Christ the King. This was to remind all the faithful that Our Lord is not only the Lord and God of individuals but also of nations and all society. As our father and patron St. Paul the Apostle reminds us, *Oportet illum regnare. (He must reign)*. Christ is King of all the faithful but also of all the nations. Therefore, all of society must be subject to his rule. When the Spanish and Mexican martyrs were being executed, they cried out *Viva Cristo Rey! Long live Christ the King!*

May we too ever have that phrase upon our lips. May Christ reign in our hearts and souls; may Christ reign over our families; may Christ reign over our nation and all the peoples of the world!

ADVENT: Next Sunday we will begin the grace-filled season of Advent. Let us use this holy time before Christmas to make our confessions, and in the long and dark evenings of Advent pray and read the spiritual classics.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda