

THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD, CHRIST THE KING
FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

NOVEMBER 26, 2017

TIME AND AGAIN

This feast of Christ the King introduces the last week of the Church year; next Sunday begins a new year with the beginning of Advent. Time passes; years come and go, and the marking of their ebb and flow segues into a discussion of the Christian meaning of time. Humanity has always been fascinated about the passing of time. Ancient people marked the passing of the seasons with prayer and rituals to their gods in order to keep time going or to figure time, as Stonehenge reveals.

On the one hand, we live by an almost universally agreed way to measure time: from anno-seconds to light years; this is objective time. It keeps things moving and relationships functioning. Because of this understanding of time, we are able to meet together not just sometime, but on a certain date, at a certain time. (Although in my office, I have two clocks, a wrist watch, a clock on my cell phone and computer, and I am still late for things.) At the same time, we live in a world where time is "measured" by our own human experience. A three-hour surgery can seem like an eternity to a worried family in the waiting room. Thus, while we live in objectively measured time, we also interpret the meaning and value of our time – a waste of time in the drudgery of chores or the rush of time as we look at the departure of someone we love. It is all determined by where we place our values. In religious terms, we call the passing of time that is not valued *chronos*, that is, the clock just ticking away. We call valued time *Kairos*, that is time in which we find meaning and value. These two elements of time are not in opposition; rather, events and insight develop *chronos* time into *kairos* time.

Because of the loving activity of God in the world, culminating in the Paschal Mystery (death and resurrection) of Jesus, all time for Christians is meant to be *kairos*. This is because, as St. Paul tells us, it is in God that we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:26). Every moment, whether awake or asleep, we are in Christ, and

that is existence filled with ultimate value of eternal life.

Of course, to live in this context is not simply a state of being, but of living (acting, thinking, speaking) in accord with the One in whom we live and move and have our being. In this context, time is *kairos* because we have to accomplish what changes the world, even if a seemingly miniscule way more and more into the Kingdom of God. In other words, we who believe in Christ, do not simply while away time until Christ's kingdom is brought to perfection, but we are intrinsically involved in the process. Christians do not compartmentalize their lives in Christ, as if we pull it out on Sunday or at a time convenient for us; we are immersed in the life of Christ, and therefore the passing of our days has significance because they determine the fulfillment of our destiny in light of how we live in Christ. Our being in Christ in the context of time, and our response to being in Him in time make the time of our lives significant, valuable. When St. Paul writes, "Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2) he does not mean a certain day or period of time with beginning and end dates (like a mattress sale), but rather that every day is the acceptable day; every day is the day of salvation. As Catholics, we emphasize certain days and seasons for observance and celebration, not because there is more grace in those days or seasons but rather that there be greater reflection on certain events of salvation, we may grow to live the reality we celebrate more fully every day.

Christ is no greater a king today than any other day, but our celebration of this day helps us to realize he is the King and Lord of our lives every day, and that fidelity to him here and now will bring us to share in his glory then and there, in his Kingdom.

May we have the time of our life every day – not simply of our earthly, but of our eternal life.