Homily for the Solemnity of Christ the King (11/24/2019)

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It will be ‘Thanksgiving weekend’ beginning this Thursday. That particular Thursday is a family-feast centered around a bountiful table. Relatives, families, and friends join together from great distances to give love and thanks.

These gatherings, relating, and partaking are signs of knowing we have a home, we have a family, where there is love, forgiveness, reunion, and of course, a wonderful meal. It is a ritual celebration, usually the same traditional food, same relatives and friends, all trying to say thanks to each other for mainly, well, just belonging, for being wanted, for being around.

The Eucharist is also a Thanksgiving celebration sharing love and thanks. And, like the celebration of this coming weekend, it does take preparation to more fully enjoy what we are doing.

Especially, as we prepare for the Solemnity of Christ the King, where we gather together in a Thanksgiving ritual, we can pray as well in the same spirit for our belonging to God’s family and to each other in Christ in His Kingdom.

Today’s feast is a very special one. We honor Jesus Christ as a King whose Kingdom is eternal in time, universal in scope, and also very personal in its power.

We know. All human empires have come and gone in history. The Roman Empire is gone. The Greek Empire is gone. The French Empire, the Spanish Empire, the British Empire, and the German Empire are all gone.

When human history is finished and after the collapse of every human kingdom, at the end, there will be only Jesus Christ. Only the Kingdom of Christ is enduring and eternal.

And, this Kingdom is not only eternal but is also universal. It is wide enough, strong enough to embrace, heal and bring forgiveness to every human being.

The brief exchange in the Gospel between Jesus and the criminal hanging next to Him shows that even in extreme agony, this King welcomes even the smallest sign of repentance. No matter how great our guilt may be, if we turn in repentance to Jesus, we find welcome and forgiveness. Everyone can enter His Kingdom. It is wide enough to invite all His people, all nations.

In fact, we are already part of His Kingdom. His Kingdom, His truth, and His grace are as close as every church, every sacrament, and every Mass. These are the access points into the Kingdom. And, the power and peace of Christ the King are right here and right now in our community.

Being good citizens of His Kingdom, we have to do everything we can do to make the kingdom of Christ present each and every day. So, this Kingdom is very personal in its power. It is about the liberation of our soul from sin. Jesus can free us in the deep depths of our soul. He gives us the truth about our life, about ourselves, about our future.

We find this Kingdom when we give and receive love. Think about our daily life; whenever and wherever we find love and care and compassion for each other, there is the Kingdom of Christ in the small happenings of daily life.

We step into His Kingdom when we visit the sick in the hospital. We find His Kingdom when we forgive the person who hurt us in some way. We also bring the Kingdom of Christ when we work for the homeless, the starving, and the aging.

Whenever we show love and care to friends and family, when we bring love to the neighbors by serving them, there is the Kingdom. Christ the King wants us to love; and when we love, we are in His Kingdom, we bring the Kingdom, we experience the Kingdom!

On this feast of Christ the King, we look at the shape of His Kingdom. It is eternal, enduring beyond every human Kingdom until the end of time. It is universal, big enough to embrace every human being. And, it is deep and personal into every human life.

Jesus is our King, and He wants all of us to establish His eternal and universal Kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, and a kingdom of justice, love, and peace.