

**Christ the King**

**The feast that closes every liturgical year**

**But this year there is something special**

**Because it is also the closing of the Year of Faith**

**The time Pope Emeritus Benedict called for before his retirement**

**A year to deepen our faith life**

**To explore what it means to live in faith**

**Like the good thief in our Gospel**

**He saw something not with human eyes**

**But with the eyes of faith**

**Eyes that were blinded in so many others**

**The other thief on the cross**

**The Pharisees**

**Even the apostles as they fled from Jesus' side**

**There is something that is a challenge for Americans**

**That is living in a kingdom**

**We see it as a human enterprise**

**And we have seen the failure of this time and again in history**

**But God designed it this way in the first place**

**Just because sin has disfigured it**

**God still desires a kingdom**

**In fact salvation history itself points to this**

**In the beginning God created from nothing**

**His crown jewel --**

**Human beings**

**Made in His image and likeness**

**Like a worldly king stamping a coin with his image**

**God stamps our souls with His image**

**And he placed us over His garden**

**To rule his creation**

**To preserve it**

**To grow it throughout the world**

**But sin entered**

**And resulted in a failure in kingship**

**Turning the garden into a desert**

**Murder and jealousy**

**Rivalry, imperialism and egoism**

**Adam and Eve**

**Cain and Abel**

**Noah, Abraham, Isaac**

**Jacob, Samuel, David**

**All called by God**

**All failing in one way or another**

**False gods, corruption, power**

**Things that continue to plague mankind even today**

**All things allowed by God**

**For our salvation**

**As St Paul tells us**

***For in him all things were created***

***Visible and invisible***

***Thrones or dominions or principalities or powers (angels)***

***He is before all things***

***All things are held together in him***

***He is the head of the body***

***The Church***

***The beginning***

***The firstborn from the dead***

***Through him to reconcile all things for him***

***Making peace by the blood of the cross***

***Whether those on earth***

***Or those in heaven***

**We need faith to see these things**

**It is easy to see where the disciples failed**

**To see where the Pharisees failed**

**To see where the bad thief failed**

**They had witnessed or heard about things he had done**

**He has saved others**

**Now if he really is the King**

**Now that he himself is in trouble**

**Save yourself**

**Don't we sometimes fall into similar criticisms?**

**If you are God**

**Why?**

**Why this illness?**

**Why did I lose my job?**

**Why did my child die?**

**Why did you take my parents at such a young age?**

**Why did my marriage fail?**

**The list is endless**

**And we can turn bitter**

**Or we can follow the example of the good thief**

***Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom***

**His eyes of faith were opened**

**To believe that there is something beyond this world**

**Something beyond what our senses tell us**

**The good thief remained on the cross**

**He doesn't seek to have his sentence removed**

**He seeks forgiveness**

**He teaches us, like St Paul, to run the race**

**Do not draw back from trusting Christ**

**No matter what the darkness and travails of this world**

**Christ the King**

**A new kingdom**

**He doesn't impose his rule upon us**

**He invites us to cooperate in his rule**

**To fulfill his plan of salvation**

**The kingdom of God is here**

**It is not a specific physical location**

**We cannot enter its coordinates into our GPS**

**It is held within the hearts and souls of all believers**

**It is not a kingdom of castles and armies**

**It is a kingdom of compassion**

**Where lives and hearts have been healed**

**Where the image of God has been renewed and restored**

**It does not belong only to a specific time or era**

**It spans all creation**

**It is a kingdom that challenges worldly powers and assumptions**

**It is not a kingdom of the individual**

**It is not about a private faith**

**It is a community of believers**

**Invited to be a part of God's army**

**His arms, legs, feet, hands and voice**

**Where we are invited to participate in the kingship of our king**

**It is headquartered at the Holy sacrifice of the Mass**

**Where we enter into the heavenly liturgy**

**Receiving Christ's body and blood**

**Soul and divinity**

**Not so he can rule externally by force**

**But so he can rule from within, through love**

**Only God can take an old wooden cross**

**And make it the centerpiece of hope and grace**

**Where he reigns**

**Yesterday, today and always**