

Christ the King

Overview

There are many devotional feasts representing Jesus throughout the liturgical year. On the Sunday before Advent begins - we celebrate that Jesus Christ is Our Lord and King. Take note that it begins the period of Advent, which is a period of waiting for the King to make his Second Coming. Next week we will have an article on the period of Advent itself – but it suffices to say that this feast is important as it concludes the church year.



What is the history?

Another devotional feast dedicated to Jesus Christ during Ordinary time of the year is that of Christ the King. This feast was established by Pope Pius XI in the year 1925 as a special spiritual weapon. The early 19th century was a period of dramatic changes in values, morals and the way people perceived their faith to be.

This change in attitudes has continued up to the 20th century – as religion has become less important to the average family. Pope Pius recognized this attitude and instituted this feast

to combat what were considered at the time to be very destructive secular forces during that age.

The Feast of Our Lord Jesus as the Universal King was originally celebrated on the last day of October. In recent times, it was moved to the final day of the church liturgical year to make it more consistent with the Sunday readings as the church year closes emphasizing the end times. Therefore, think of this feast as a last “Lord’s Day”.

Why is this feast so important?

It is interesting that the year 1925 was the 1600th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea – which occurred in the year 325. In that council the early church was combating many heresies and they met for this first of the ecumenical councils in the city of Nicaea (in modern Turkey).

The Emperor Constantine requested this council in 325 to resolve several controversies. The chief issue was with Arius – a priest – who was teaching that Jesus was not God in the same way as the Father. This was condemned but cropped up several times during the next centuries. The council professed the full divinity of God the Son and full equality with the Father – as expressed in the Greek word *homoousious* – that means of the same substance or one in being.

The council also decided to celebrate Easter on the date of the Jewish Passover. Several canons – or rules – were also passed. Noteworthy for Catholics is that the Nicene Creed recited in every weekend Mass has its beginnings at this meeting – and was finalized in the council of 381.

The feast is important because it recognizes that Jesus is the One True King.