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Christ the King - Our Eucharist

By [Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.](#)



The Philistines had beat them, and the Israelites were determined not to let it happen again. So they demanded from God and from his prophet, Samuel, what all the other nations had—a king to lead them in battle and protect them from their enemies (1 Sam 8:19). So God gave them Saul, who ultimately failed in his task. Then David was chosen. An unlikely candidate at first glance, a mere shepherd boy.



But wait a minute. When you consider God's idea of kingship, maybe David's experience as shepherd made him perfectly suited for the task. For the shepherd's duty was twofold. When a lion or bear threatened the flock, the shepherd had to fight and protect. But his more daily task was to bring the sheep to pasture where they could eat and drink, rest and prosper.

David showed his mettle when Goliath mocked and intimidated God's people. And he brought Israel from the status of a disorganized, beleaguered people to a unified Middle-Eastern empire. He made his people proud and set them up for success. But he could not resist skimming off some cream in the process. His goal was to protect and care for the flock. But he saw a fair Ewe and snatched her for himself, though her husband was risking his very life for David on the battlefield. And David ultimately took that life to cover up his sin (2 Sam 11).

That's precisely why God had advised his people against a king in the first place. The great ones of this world, reminds Jesus, make their authority felt. They use their authority for their advantage, ultimately exploiting those whom they are supposed to protect.

So Jesus comes as a king, but not a king of this world (Jn 18:36). Ever wonder why he told people to be quiet who went about proclaiming him messiah-king? Because [his kingship](#) was different than the kind of kingship they were expecting. Yes, he was indeed on a mission to rescue his people from the power of darkness (Col 1:12). But his crown was of thorns rather than of gold. His weapon was the cross rather than a sword. He came to serve rather than to be served. So the sign over his head on the cross, intended as mockery, proclaimed profound truth: "[Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews](#)" (Lk 23:38). This is true kingship: the true king-shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.



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And how about the provision he makes for his subjects? After all, his role is to feed as well as defend. He fed them and continues to feed them from two tables: the Word and the Eucharist. His teaching and the sacrament of his body and blood together constitute the refreshing nourishment that has made his sheep prosper for 2,000 years. These pastures are always green. True, some of the flock doesn't look so prosperous. But what they say about leading a horse to water is equally true about sheep and pasture: you can lead them there, but you can't make them eat and drink.

For now he nourishes us through signs. The words of Scripture are signs and all the life-giving sacraments are signs. For now, he protects our souls from being enslaved to the powers of darkness, but our bodies and property are still subject to their harassment.



But things are not now as they will one day be. The king who once rode into town on a donkey will next time be riding on the clouds. He will come no longer in suffering but will rather be clothed in glory. Now it takes faith to see him. Then his coming will be plain as day. Now he compels no one. Then every knee will have no choice but to bow.

When he comes, it will no longer matter who won the election, the promotion, or the Oscar.. He will make all things new. Some will be ready, many will not. Some who are last will be first. Others who are first will be last.

The question is not when this will happen. The question is, when it does happen, in which group will you be?

This article was originally published in Our Sunday Visitor as a reflections on the readings for the Feast of Christ the King, cycle C (2 Samuel 5, 1-3, Psalm 122, Colossians 1:12-20, and Luke 23:35-53). It is reproduced here by permission of the author.

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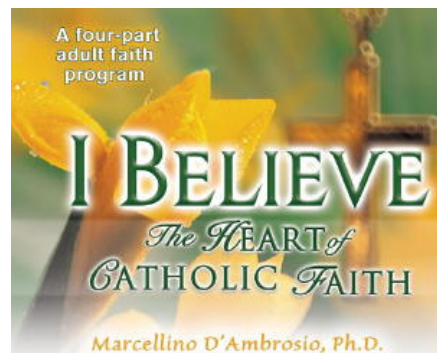
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