

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We celebrate the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe today. In a time of great political division in our country (yes, I know, there's always been division, but it seems like it is getting worse and worse), this is a time when we focus on who our real Lord is – not the President, not the Congress, not Justices, nor local government officials, but Jesus Christ.

I was sharing with people the other day about how I was at a Steubenville East Youth Conference several years ago, when division began to break out. This was back when the only Steubenville Youth Conferences were held in Ohio and in Massachusetts (as opposed to the 21 different locations next year). This meant that we had students from all over the northeast and beyond. At one point, some of the students started chanting “Let’s go Rex Sox!” This was quickly followed up by Yankee fans and their chant. The leaders recognized this could bring division and discord, causing problems at the conference. They got up immediately to remind the students that we were there to focus on Jesus, not on sports. As good as sports are, our center is Jesus.

I think the same principle applies here. While politics are arguably more important than baseball, they are not the “end all be all.” JESUS IS. No matter who is in the White House, Jesus is still King. No matter who “controls” the Senate or the House, Jesus is still Lord.

Do we believe this?

Do we live like this is true?

In the Gospel today, Jesus is standing trial before Pilate. From the look of everything, Jesus is powerless, in the hands of this Roman Governor, and will soon be crucified. In this scenario, looking at it as an outsider, Pilate has all the power, and he “wins;” he is more kingly than Jesus. But Jesus says that His reign is not of this world... it is different. Even though Pilate ends up having Jesus killed, in the end, Jesus is victorious. In His weakness, He conquers death. Jesus is not a political power, but one much deeper, and much more important!

When we struggle with the way things are in the world, do we look to Jesus to lead us and guide us? When the darkness of our particular circumstances closes in, do we trust that Jesus is the true light? This is the meaning of “Jesus, I trust in You.” We recognize that even when things look bad, Jesus is in charge and makes *right* out of the wrong that we are so good at doing.

So the question is: have I allowed Jesus to be King *in me*? He is Lord and King of the Universe, but have I given up my throne, my illusion of control and let Him reign in me?

This is the most important question we can ask ourselves. He has an answer for every circumstance in our lives. The problem is that we want to avoid the crosses as they come up. Jesus tells u that it is not in avoiding crosses, but in embracing them that we find His Kingship, and enter His incredible reign. Pilate, in today’s Gospel, scoffs at Jesus and His “Kingship” – “Then you are a king?” (John 18:37; in the next verse, Pilate goes on to ridicule Jesus more by saying, “What is truth?!”). It is on the cross, rather, that Jesus’ Kingship is first really recognized by Dismas, the “good thief.” It is there that he cries out, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Luke 23: 42).

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King, may we recognize Christ is truly King, invite Him to be King in our lives, and look to Him for hope in a world filled with despair. May we not run from the cross, but cling to it, and in the weakness of the cross, find the might of the Kingdom of God!