**Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe 11/24/2024**

Today’s Gospel passage from John is one of **great drama and tens**i**on**. Pilate vs. Jesus. And it contains some memorable lines, one of which is right in the middle of today’s passage.

**“My Kingdom does not belong to this world.”**

Of course, this reading was chosen by the Church for this day, not by accident, but because we are celebrating the Solemnity of Christ the King. Therefore, it seems important and logical for the “**Kingdom**” to be in the forefront of our minds, thoughts, and prayers this day. Christ is our King. It sounds simple. Figuring out **what that means for us**, his followers, is another story.

For many years, when I heard the line, **“My Kingdom does not belong to this world**” I always interpreted it in a certain way. At the very least, the kingdom and the world seem to be completely different things.

Is that what Jesus is saying? Is he setting up a kingdom vs. world scenario? Is he telling us to embrace the kingdom and reject the world?

As I said earlier, that is how I used to interpret that line from Scripture, but not anymore. Looking back, I had been ignoring one crucial word, one which can make all the difference in how we understand this verse. And that word is “**belong.”**

Those of us who have been in love at one time or another have some idea what “belonging” means. Many of us have probably, at one time said to our significant other, “My heart belongs to you” or “I am yours.” To say that we are another’s suggests a uniting of dreams, purpose, hopes, and concerns. It means that when we are with that other person, we feel connected, a perfect fit for **who they are** and **what they are about.**

And for some of us, unfortunately, that feeling is short-lived. What was seen as a good fit becomes **no fit at all**. And the two people are left struggling to recapture what once was. Some succeed. Others wind up brokenhearted.

The world is not much different. God created the world good, and well, you know the rest. One of God’s greatest gifts to us, our freedom to choose, resulted in the continual damaging of God’s beautiful world, by our hands. The world and God were once a perfect fit, **but not anymore**. But that does not mean that the world has to remain that way. Jesus’s sacrifice has made all things possible. When Jesus took on our human nature, the whole created world became “**divined**” in a certain sense, infused with possibility of reflecting the Divine in ways that it had not since the very beginning, before the Fall.

The world is not an end in itself, nor is it what ultimately should own our hearts. The kingdom does not belong to the world**, the world belongs to the kingdom,** to the extent that we allow it to be, nurture it to be, and shape it to be.

Can we say the same thing, that we belong to the kingdom? As I said earlier, many of us have said, “I am yours,” to someone in our lives. Have we ever said it to God, **and truly meant it?** Just something to think about this day.