**Homily Suggestions – Year A**

**for the Global Celebration of Young People**

**on the Solemnity of Christ the King**

The following may be used as a guide for presiders in preparing homilies in how they might fit to the universal celebration of youth and young adults throughout the Church. Further integration of the specific theme of the year (provided by the Holy See prior to Christ the King Sunday) is also recommended. What follows are ideas with a more general approach between the solemnity and young people.

As the final Sunday of the liturgical year celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we are given us a nuanced image of Christ the King with each passing year, but all contain images that can attract the hearts of young people.

The idea of a “king” does not readily connect with our contemporary ears, especially in the United States, and yet on this day, we celebrate the kingship of Christ over the universe. The key to connecting the readings of Christ the King with this day for youth and young adults, is the same as others: it is all about relationships. Thus, what we are presented with in the Gospels is Jesus, the king, who does not lord his position over creation, but rather, inspires us to follow him in a spirit of servant leadership.

Year A

Ez 34:11-12, 15-17

Ps 23: 1-2, 2-3, 5-6

1 Cor 15:20-26, 28

Mt 25:31-46

The first reading from Ezekiel (Ez 34:11-12, 15-17) focuses on the “scattered sheep” (Ez 34:12), noting how God will pasture his flock and give them rest, seek those who are lost, injured, or sick, and, ultimately, hold them accountable. The Psalm response (Ps 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6) continues that theme, as the Psalmist reflects on the experience of the one protected and guided by the Lord as a shepherd, and the Gospel reading (Mt 25:31-46) is an account of Jesus’ words in which he describes his kingly role “as a shepherd” (Mt 25:32) separating the sheep and goats.

The imagery of the shepherd and the sheep is one that can connect to young people. Youth and young adults today can often feel lost, hurt, or suffering, akin to the sheep Ezekiel describes. Loneliness, physical and mental health concerns, past and present pains inflicted by older generations and religious authorities, and the experiences of searching for identity, purpose, and meaning are all elements of the journey for many young people.

By helping youth and young adults better know and feel loved by Christ the King, who like the shepherd “will give them rest” (Ez 34:15) and gives repose, leading them to restful waters (cf. Ps 23:2), we can offer young people a sense of hope in the midst of their struggles and daily realities. This is a powerful message to offer on the solemnity, echoed by Pope Francis in Christus Vivit: “May all young people who are suffering feel the closeness of a Christian community that can reflect (Jesus’) words by its actions, its embrace, and its concrete help.” (CV 77)

In addition, the Gospel also speaks of the accountability that Jesus demands: “For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35) This passage invites listeners, including young people, to think of their own participation in the royal priesthood of believers, with a call to serve all humanity, particularly the most humble and lowly.

In some respects, the message is also a challenge to all generations to consider how they approach youth and young adults, especially those we do not yet know (like the “stranger” that Jesus speaks about in Mt 25:35). Have we welcomed them, given them rest and refuge like the shepherd (cf. Ez 34)? Or have we neglected or ignored them?

The focus on outreach to those impoverished, alone, and afraid is a call to old and young alike to consider how they live out their baptismal calling as participants in Christ as “priest, prophet, and king” in service to the world. This can be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on ambition and power, and what it truly means to be “in charge” like a king; the Gospel points to a king that calls for radical compassion and action towards those on the peripheries of society, when “in Christ shall all be brought to life,” as St. Paul notes (1 Cor 15:22) in this week’s second reading.

In each cycle, the Solemnity of Christ the King upends our expectations of ambition, power, and authority. This set of readings point to the compassionate work of the shepherd king, and our work at following the Lord’s lead in humbly listening and serving one another, and in a particular way to youth and young adults in our midst.

*From the* [***USCCB National Pastoral Guidebook for the Global Celebration of Young People***](https://www.usccb.org/resources/usccb-christ-the-king-guidebook.pdf)*(English), pp. 43-44. (Put here into a Word doc to make it easier to print and give to your priest/deacon.)*