**Homily Suggestions – Year B**

**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 B

Dn 7:13-14

Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5

Rev 1:5-8

Jn 18:33b-37

The central focus of these readings for the Solemnity of Christ the King is the notion of identity. In the Gospel (Jn 18:33b-37), Pontius Pilate asks Jesus about his identity: “Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn 18:33) and in the other readings, the authors of those texts offer testimony about the Lord’s identity as a king.

For young people, the quest for self-discovery is particularly important. The U.S. Bishops noted in their pastoral plan on ministry with young adults that “while individuals continue to mature throughout life, various new experiences influence the development of personal identity.”[[1]](#footnote-1) These are significant years of growth and decision-making, as they develop physically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually - becoming who God made them to be. Yet social media, cultural colonization, various pressures, and life among their peers can influence them to mask their true selves, hide or neglect their cultural heritage, create illusions of self-control, or revert to negative habits.

A homily can reflect on Jesus’ identity as a servant king and connect that with the journey that youth and young adults are taking as they reflect on their own identity. Jesus’ kingship is not one of earthly power and authority, but one of humility and meekness, as he says “My kingdom does not belong to this world” in Jn 18:356). Christ’s kingship goes beyond human understanding of the word and his identity is greater than reputation, assumption, or projection could ever envision. In much the same way, our identity as a beloved son or daughter of God is greater than human words can describe. Young people may worry about the way they are perceived, or that the actions of their past will define them, yet God’s kingdom and his definition of “identity” is greater than these worldly conditions.

The prophet Daniel (in Dn 7:13-14) and the Psalmist (in Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5) describe the Lord as “one like a Son of Man coming, on the clouds of heaven” (Dn 7:13) or as “in splendor robed... girt about with strength” (Ps 93:1). The author of Revelation (in Rv 1:5-8) shares his experience seeing Christ in his heavenly kingdom who proclaims his universal identity: “I am the Alpha and the Omega... the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty” (Rv 1:8). Yet, as the Gospel reminds us, this power and might is at the service of those who are most lowly, the most hurt, and the most afraid.

When youth or young adults themselves feel downtrodden and weak, uncertain of themselves (as many do feel), it is helpful for homilists to share the news that they indeed have a savior who is powerful beyond imagination, who wants to help them out of their depths. As Pope noted, “if you have lost your inner vitality, your dreams, your enthusiasm, your optimism, and your generosity, Jesus stands before you as once he stood before the dead son of the widow, and with all the power of his resurrection, he urges you: ‘Young man, I say to you, arise!’ (Lk 7:14)” (CV 20).

Homilists can project a similar encouragement to the young people in their midst, inviting them to see Christ as the king who raises them up from their lowliness and gives them a renewed identity and purpose for life. Homilists can invite young people to consider the most integral part of their own identity; one that challenges cultural norms: their identity as a Christian. It brings with it rights and responsibilities. To embrace one’s identity as a Christian is to go against norms and expectations of others, and consider first the poor and those suffering, putting the needs of others before oneself, and seeing Christ present in all people.

To follow in the footsteps of Christ the King, we must look to his identity as a servant leader and embrace the attitudes of his sacred heart: compassion, respect, forgiveness, generosity, courage, confidence, and integrity. And when we do so, we “put on Christ” (cf. Rm 13:14) for the life of the world.

*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. 44-45. (Put here into a Word doc to make it easier to print and give to your priest/deacon.)*

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults. Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, 1996. Part One, Section 1, ”Tasks of Young Adulthood,” paragraph 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)