**Homily Suggestions – Year C**

**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 C

2 Sm 5:1-3

Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

Col 1:12-20

Lk 23:35-43

Once again upending expectations, the readings for this cycle of Christ the King Sunday give us insight around vulnerability, an interesting perspective on a feast celebrating the power and might of the Almighty.

In the first reading (2 Sm 5:1-3), the elders of the tribes of Israel admitted their vulnerability as a nation, saw God at work in a young man (David), and anointed him their king (cf. 2 Sm 5:3).

In the second reading (Col 1:12-20), St. Paul admits our vulnerability as humans, as we need God to deliver us “from the power of darkness” (1 Col 1:13) and provide us with forgiveness and redemption (cf. 1 Col 1:14).

In the Gospel reading (Lk 23:35-43), Jesus is at his most vulnerable moment: on the cross, stripped and hanging for all the world to see, including his executioners and the criminals beside him. He endures taunting from the passers-by who sneer “He saved others, let him save himself the chosen one, the Christ of God” (Lk 23:35).

Vulnerability is not something many people revel in, and yet on the Solemnity of Christ, king of the universe, we are invited to reflect on this concept. We are asked to sit in uncomfortable situations and admit or face our weaknesses. The most common Christian image is the cross, a symbol of death and dying, the epitome of vulnerability.

Youth and young adults (and those of any age group) can often fear moments of vulnerability. We want to assert our power and control over any given situation, for fear of going someplace uncomfortable and painful. Yet on the Solemnity of Christ the King, we are shown that true power and control is about relinquishing it and growing from that, no matter where it takes us. This is a very challenging message for homilists to share with anyone, let alone young people who are navigating their vulnerability in their developmental journey of life.

The criminal on the cross next to Jesus faces his powerlessness head on, saying to those who would ridicule the Lord, “Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes... Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23:40,42). His vulnerability shines forth in the midst of the storm on Calvary.

Young people are more vulnerable than we may see on the surface or than they are comfortable admitting. They may be masking something painful or embarrassing with confidence, deflection, or indifference. However, as Pope Francis noted, “We adults can often be tempted to list all the problems and failings of today’s young people... (but) anyone called to be a parent, pastor, or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken (cf. Is 42:3) ... Each young person’s heart should thus be considered ‘holy ground,’ a bearer of the seeds of divine life, before which we must ‘take off our shoes’ in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery” (CV 66, 67).

The homilist can invite the community to be patient with youth and young adults, recognizing that they may have vulnerabilities we cannot immediately see on the surface. Yet like Christ the King on the cross, we can offer them our support and renewed hope. Likewise, the homilist can encourage the young people of the community to look to Jesus who shares in their suffering and pain, as he did on the cross.

*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. 46-47. (Put here into a Word doc to make it easier to print and give to your priest/deacon.)*