

Today is the Last Sunday of the Church Year, often called “Christ the King.”

As Americans, born and raised in a constitutional republic, with democratic values - it’s often a bit of a struggle to understand this whole “King” thing.

Sure, we’ve got Burger King. Hostess brands has King Don, who hangs out with Twinkie the Kid and Fruit Pie the Magician. Budweiser is the King of Beers - although in India that title is held by locally brewed Kingfisher brand. On TV there’s the King of Queens, and King of the Hill; we’ve got classic movies like King Kong, and the King and I; more recently we have the King’s Speech, King Ralph, and The Return of the King. We have kings in fairy tales; and Mister Rogers had King Friday XIII who ruled over the Kingdom of Make-Believe; Walt Disney Studios gave us the Lion King

As far as real-live kings, in Europe there are 10 monarchies: [Andorra, Belgium, Denmark, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom]; in the Middle East there are 10 monarchies: [Bahrain, Brunei, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates]; there are 5 monarchies in Asia: [Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Thailand, and Tonga]; and 2 in Africa: [Swaziland and Lesotho].

Canada, our neighbor to the north, considers the British monarch to be their head-of-state; because they are part of the 15 nations in the Commonwealth.

And the Pope is officially the head of state of the Vatican - in effect its king.

We know that in a game of checkers, when one of your pieces gets to the end of the board, you get to say “king me!” and now you’ve got an advantage over your opponent. If you’re not into checkers, but maybe chess, the King is the piece that you have to protect if you don’t want to lose the game.

But for the most part, kings aren’t something we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, and other than in stories, snack foods, and games - we’re sort of at a loss to wrap our minds around the idea of kings.

In the Gospel, we hear about the king who judges at the end of time and separates the righteous from the unrighteous. The king here is Jesus Christ - the Son of Man - who judges based on how we lived out our lives.

Nobody gets to vote. The sheep and goats aren’t asked their opinions. In fact, neither the sheep nor the goats seem to have any idea that they’ve even done anything for the king. Both the sheep and the goats ask - “when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison ...”?

In 1925, when Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King, he asked that on this day the faithful recite an Act of Dedication to Jesus Christ King. When Pope Paul VI moved this feast to the Last Sunday of the Liturgical Year, he changed the name to Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Often times the difficulty is that we’ve made Jesus Christ the Lord and King of 45 minutes on Saturday or Sunday. It’s even harder to make him Lord and King of particular areas or parts of our lives. While I’m sure that God recognizes the obstacles to total surrender - making Jesus Christ Our Lord and King of Everything - in His generosity, God has given us the infinite graces to make that desire a reality.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us pray to dedicate ourselves anew to Jesus Christ as Our Lord, and ask for the graces we need to make him King of Everything in our lives.