

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The concept of Jesus Christ King of the Universe is rooted in Jesus' identity as the son of David, and he thus fulfills the prophetic promise to King David that the Lord would give him a kingdom that would last forever. (2 Samuel 7:16) At the Annunciation the Angel Gabriel confirmed the fulfillment of this promise, saying that the child of the Virgin Mary would inherit the throne of his Father David and that his kingdom would have no end. (Luke 1:32-33) This universal authority is claimed by the Lord himself when he says "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18) That this kingship is cosmic and eternal is revealed in the writings of St. Paul who says "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Philippians 2:10-11) In the Book of Revelation, St. John sees the Lord enthroned in heaven with all the hosts of heaven worshipping him singing, "The Kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

This final victory and reign of the Lord is what we celebrate now, at the end of Ordinary Time. Theologians reflecting on this truth have pointed out that this eternal reign of Christ is not only a glory to look forward to in the future, but because it is an eternal reality it is outside of earthly time. Therefore, it is a reality even now. The goal, therefore, is for us to live within that reality even though it often seems that the devil and the powers of darkness still rule in this world.

In fact, they do NOT rule in this world. Jesus Christ, King of the Universe conquered the powers of darkness in his passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is the reality of his kingdom active and dynamic here in this realm of space and time and human history. Never forget, therefore, that we are citizens of heaven. Although we dwell in this mortal sphere, we are, in reality, the subjects of the eternal king. We live here in this realm for several decades as aliens in a foreign land. Our true home is another country far beyond the stars where the King of Glory reigns.

Our worship is a glimpse of that glory and a foretaste of heaven. During the coming season of Advent, I encourage you to read the Book of Revelation—especially chapters 4-6 and trace there the similarities between John's vision of heavenly worship and the worship at OLR. There you will find incense and angels, the four mysterious beasts that represent the gospel writers, the Lamb on the throne and the cherubim who cry Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord. This is why our worship aims to be otherworldly. We don't sing music that sounds like a pop tune or a love song from a Disney film. We sing sacred music that lifts our hearts and minds to heaven and takes us to the threshold of our true home.

Your Pastor  
Fr. Longenecker