

Feast of Christ the King

“My kingdom is not of this world”

*“I caught the happy virus last night when I was out singing beneath the stars.
It is remarkably contagious - So kiss me.”* (Hafiz, 14th Sufi Mystic in present day Iran)

Feast of Christ the King

Today is the Feast of Christ the King. It was established in 1925 to recognize the all-embracing authority of Christ. Thinking of Christ as King is not natural to us. It is not an authority we relate to. Perhaps a better language today would be, “*Christ, the First Idea of God,*” or “*Christ, the Purpose of the Universe.*” All language falls short. How about: “*Christ, Finding Kinship in God.*” Whatever we call it, the intuition is that Christ is the union of the spiritual with the material in all things, as seen in Jesus.

“My Kingdom is not of this world”

We live in two kingdoms, the Kingdom of the World, and the Kingdom of God. The two are opposites. The Kingdom of the World doesn’t forgive, it blames; it doesn’t set free, it controls; it doesn’t restore, it punishes. The Kingdom of God doesn’t blame, it forgives; it doesn’t control, it sets free; it doesn’t punish, it restores. The world’s kingdom leads to competition, anger and turmoil; God’s Kingdom brings compassion, forgiveness and peace.

Watching Jesus in God’s Kinship

So, the question is, how do we live in God’s Kingdom while finding ourselves in the world’s? There is no better place to start in answering this question than to watch Jesus, especially on Calvary. He knew fear and terror: “*No, let this cup pass from me!*” - “*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*” And yet his response was not to blame or condemn; it was to forgive and restore. He kept his eyes on his Father and stayed on Calvary long enough to say, “*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*” He moved from the passion of fear and terror to the resurrection of peace and hope. He remained in the Kingdom of God.

Watching Mary in God’s Kinship

We watch Mary. She knew fear and terror, watching her innocent Son being put to death. She just stood there at the foot of the cross, which in Hebrew culture was a sign of strength. Her response was not to blame or condemn; it was to forgive and restore. She kept her eyes on Jesus’ Father and stayed on Calvary long enough to say with her Son, “*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*” The move from fear and terror to peace and hope is what it is like to be in the Kinship of God.

Being in the Kinship of God

We know fear and terror. It is all around us: “*Lord, save us!*” Our response must not be to blame or condemn. We want, like Jesus and Mary, to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus’ Father long enough to say, “*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*” The move from fear and terror to peace and hope is what it is like to be in the Kinship of God.

Fear and Terror are Signs of Spiritual Hunger

Living in the Kingdom of this world does not satisfy our Spirit Hunger. We’re used to thinking about Body-Hunger, our built-in warning system that our bodies are in need of body nourishment. But we’re not used to thinking about Spirit-Hunger. Symptoms of Spirit Hunger are, *Anger, Pride, Deceit, Greed, Fear, Gluttony, Lust and Sloth*, our built-in warning system that our Spirit is in need of Spirit nourishment. These symptoms are our friends, they’re telling us what we need. We shouldn’t get so upset with them.

What nourishes our spirits? A good Spirit meal. Some of our favorite Spirit meals?

Quiet. Spend time alone, in the dark, not trying to think - plan - solve or forget anything. This can help our Spirits soften, open up, relax, forgive. This is feeding the Spirit.

Sharing with another. This helps lift the weight we’ve been carrying, remove the isolation you’ve been experiencing, soften our discouragement, let go of the hurt we’ve been feeling. This is feeding the Spirit.

Helping others. This helps sharpen our awareness of the world around us, our sensitivity to the needs of others, our forgiving the failures of others, our compassion for the weakness of others. This is feeding the Spirit.

Reading. This helps open up our mind, to see other points of view, deepen our appreciation for God in us, inspire us to reach out to others. This is feeding the Spirit.

Prayer. This helps us feel God working in us and for us, connecting us to others who care about us and who care for us, find deeper meaning in life, realize we are not alone. This is feeding the Spirit.

Sitting down to our favorite spirit dish will refresh our spirit to become healthy and strong, and not be overpowered by fear, shame and the terror of death. This puts us into the Kinship of God, and whenever we find ourselves there, we will find ourselves singing at the top of our voices:

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Happy Christ the King Feast Day!