

Christ THE KING

Jesus Christ Our King

Although Jesus proclaimed the coming of God's kingdom or rule over our world as God's kingdom, Christians have long celebrated Jesus as King because he was God's promised Messiah (the Christ, or "anointed one"), who would be from the royal family of Israel's king David and rule as king over the covenant people in God's place and according to God's guidelines for right living that would bring about a world of justice or right relationships between persons and in their social institutions, held together by love rather than violence and power, resulting in peace and well-being for all.

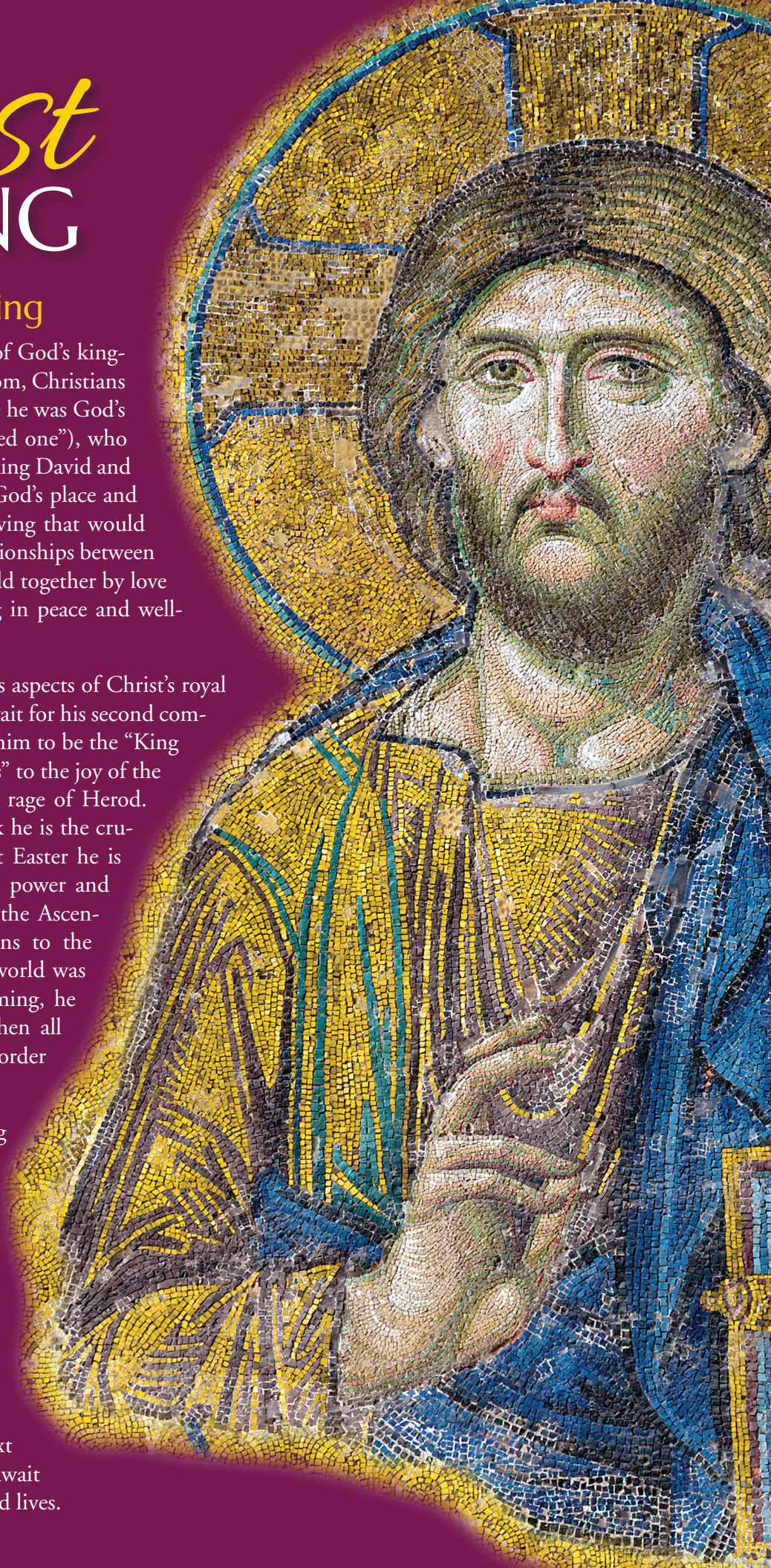
Thus during the Church year, various aspects of Christ's royal role are celebrated. In Advent Christians wait for his second coming in glory. At Christmas his star reveals him to be the "King



of the Judeans" to the joy of the magi and the rage of Herod. In Holy Week he is the crucified king, at Easter he is resurrected in power and glory, and at the Ascension he returns to the

glory he had with the Father before the world was created. And at his return or second coming, he will preside in judgment over sin and then all creation will be restored to its God-given order under his rule.

But the actual feast of Christ the King was a newer feast that was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 when secularism was on the rise with the establishment of non-Christian dictatorships in Europe. It was celebrated on the final Sunday of October, prior to All Saints Day. In 1969 Pope Paul VI moved the feast to the last Sunday before Advent so that the Church's liturgical year culminates in the celebration of Christ's kingship over all creation and the new year begins the next week with Advent, when we once again await the coming of Christ to rule our hearts and lives.



SEASONS of the Liturgical Year

Advent begins the liturgical year on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. A season of hope as well as penance, Advent features the writings of the Old Testament prophets in its Mass readings.

Christmas begins with Christmas Day, goes through Epiphany and concludes with the Baptism of the Lord. As a celebration of the Incarnation, the Christmas season also highlights the manifestation of Christ's divinity to the world.

Lent is a 40 day preparation for Easter that focuses on fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Lent is a time to reflect on how well we are living out our baptism.

The Paschal or Easter Triduum (from the Latin, three days) begins with the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and continues until Easter evening.

The **Easter Season** extends from Easter Sunday through Pentecost Sunday. During this time, the Church reflects on the mystery of our redemption through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Ordinary Time is the only liturgical season that comes in two sections. The first begins with the Baptism of the Lord and goes until Ash Wednesday. The second follows Pentecost and concludes with the Feast of Christ the King.

Jesus' Role as King

In the ancient world, a king was responsible for the order of the people's life. He embodied the power to make dreams become reality, to put visions into policies which governed the lives of all concerned. He also was a source for the protection and defense of the values encoded in the social structures of the people. The king took the place of God as the enactor of the divine order that God wished to establish in history. The king needed to have a firm grasp of the vision and values which God wanted, and then had to depend upon his own wisdom to make the values become the driving energy for the enactment of public policies. As our king, Jesus fulfills these functions for us and shows us how to order our lives according to God's guidelines for right living.

Sharing in Jesus' Kingly Role

Through baptism we are made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. Jesus proclaimed a simple yet radical message of God's new kingdom, which was his code word for the transformed reality where God rules as the center of meaning and the object of all our actions. As Christ's followers, everything must be reordered with God as the center and our primary concern must be to live now the way that God had wanted everyone to live at the time of creation—in right relationships with God and with one another that were grounded in love, expressed in justice and oriented to the well-being of all.

Jesus' kingdom invitation challenges us to notice God present in our midst and make a commitment to relate to God. It challenges us to see the world as God does, evaluate it as God does and act in it as God does. It challenges us to link our hope for a new order with God's dream for the right kind of community. Finally, it challenges us to engage in the real cosmic power struggle between God and Satan, good and evil to reorder our world as God desires it to be.



Following Jesus our King Today

A Household Activity

St. Paul tells us that proclaiming "Jesus is Lord" is the first step to salvation (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3). This commitment demands complete and exclusive loyalty if we want to receive the benefits/gifts (grace) that God distributes. This demand for loyalty is the fundamental question for every Christian, so gather your household and use these questions to examine how you are living out your loyalty and commitment to Jesus our King and Lord.

- **Who is your lord and God (*dominus et deus*) whom you will you serve (Lk 4:8; 1 Thes 1:9)?**

- Is it Caesar (power and violence) or Christ (Jn 19:12)?

- Is it Mammon (money and possessions) or Christ (Mt 6:24; Lk 6:13)?

- Is it Satan (evil and exploitation) or Christ?

- **How do my actions and not just my words reveal where my loyalty and commitment really lie?**

- **How does the way I spend my time reveal my true commitments?**