

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

**Forbearance is correcting a person gradually and gently
and with much compassion, prudence and discretion**
(St. Francis De Sales).

Daniel 7:13-14

Reading Daniel 7:1-12 will make this excerpt more meaningful for us. It describes Daniel's vision of four beasts that emerged from the sea, from the depth of chaos. The first beast was a lion with eagle's wings and a human heart representing the Babylonian empire; the second was a bear with three ribs hanging from its teeth representing the Medes; the third was a leopard with four heads and four wings representing the Persians; and the fourth with iron teeth and huge feet representing the Greek empire.

This excerpt speaks of the fifth figure that appeared in Daniel's vision. This was not a beast, not an evil earthly king, but the glorious Son of Man. This Son of man is the one on whom the Ancient one, God, would confer dominion, glory, and sovereignty. The four beasts emerged from the depths, from chaos, from evil...but the Son of Man comes from heaven, from goodness, from God. The four beasts reigned only for a period of time and were overthrown by others like them, but the Son of Man would reign over all people and forever. We have come to know today that this Son of Man is Jesus. Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man who came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Psalms 93

Psalms 93 is a hymn celebrating the kingship of God. "The Lord is king" literally means "the Lord reigns." This psalm and Psalms 47 and 96-99, are called enthronement psalms. They may have been used in a special liturgy during which God's ascent to the throne was ritually reenacted as the earthly king (David) was enthroned and re-enthroned each year. It was to keep the earthly king humble reminding him that God was the real King and his kingship is for eternity while earthly kingship is for a brief period. The floods have tried to overcome the world, but the Lord is mightier than all floods. His rule is firm and lasting forever.

**The Lord is king in splendor robed;
Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.
And he has made the world firm, not to be moved.
Your throne stands firm from of old;
From everlasting you are, O Lord.**

Revelation 1:5-8

This excerpt tells us that Jesus, as “faithful witness, first-born from the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth”, loves us and frees us from our sins and transforms us into a royal and priestly people, not for a period of time like the beasts in the vision of Daniel, but forever. And that is the reason to say, “to him be glory and honor forever”.

We are a priestly people. St. Peter tells us, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people he claims his own to proclaim the glorious works of the one who called you from darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

One of the most important things that a priest is called to do is to “proclaim the glorious works” of God, as Peter says. To be priestly people, we must share in this work of proclaiming the glorious works of God – the good news of love, forgiveness, healing and grace.

John 18:33-37

This excerpt features Pilate alone with Jesus, away from the crowd that demanded the death of Jesus. Pilate had an opportunity to discover the truth Jesus proclaimed and be transformed by that truth. He had an opportunity to deny “mob justice”, set aside his own pride and power and accept the truth of Jesus. But he failed to accept Jesus and his kingdom of truth and justice.

Jesus told Pilate that he came to testify to the truth, God’s truth. He came to reveal truth about God, about us and about the world around us.....about God’s plan and purpose for his creation. God’s truth is the gift that Jesus brought. It is up to us to accept the truth and live in truth and be transformed by the truth that Jesus revealed.

We are called to be a royal people, living noble lives, and creating a kingdom of justice and peace for all.

Saint of the Day, November 24 - St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions and 146 other saints are remembered this day.

Andrew was born Trần An Dũng in 1795 in Vietnam, taking the name Andrew at his baptism (Anrê Dũng) and was ordained a priest on March 15, 1823. During persecution, Andrew Dũng changed his name to Lạc to avoid capture, and thus he is memorialised as Andrew Dũng-Lạc (Anrê Dũng Lạc).

Andrew Dung-Lac was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. Members of the companions group gave their lives for Christ in the 17th, 18th, and 19th

centuries, and received beatification during four different occasions between 1900 and 1951. All were canonized during the papacy of Saint John Paul II.

Christianity came to Vietnam through the Portuguese. Jesuits opened the first permanent mission at Da Nang in 1615. They ministered to Japanese Catholics who had been driven from Japan. Severe persecutions were launched at least three times in the 19th century. During the six decades after 1820, between 100,000 and 300,000 Catholics were killed or subjected to great hardship. Foreign missionaries martyred in the first wave included priests of the Paris Mission Society, and Spanish Dominican priests and tertiaries.

In 1832, Emperor Minh-Mang banned all foreign missionaries, and tried to make all Vietnamese deny their faith by trampling on a crucifix. Like the priest-holes in Ireland during English persecution, many hiding places were offered in homes of the faithful. Persecution broke out again in 1847, when the emperor suspected foreign missionaries and Vietnamese Christians of sympathizing with a rebellion led by one of his sons. The last of the martyrs were 17 laypersons, one of them a 9-year-old, executed in 1862. That year a treaty with France guaranteed religious freedom to Catholics, but it did not stop all persecution.

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