

## The Feast of Christ the King

### Homily

I wonder how many important certificates you have filed away safely somewhere at home? Can you even remember where? We all go through life collecting certificates and badges. No sooner have we been born that our parents have to register our existence and claim a birth certificate. As we get older, we get certificates to prove that we've reached grade 1 on the piano, we've had immunisations, managed to swim twenty lengths, or passed exams. If we marry, we sign registers and are given a certificate after the service. We gain qualifications relating to our work, to our leisure. Even on our death, certificates are produced to show for certain that we are no longer around!

Badges are usually different. We wear them to show that we are members of something, or that we feel strongly for a cause to which we lend our support. From school crests on blazers and sweatshirts, bracelets, poppies, ribbons or chains of office, badges say something about who we are and with whom we belong.

At our Baptism we are given a certificate. It generally looks quite attractive and since we never know when we might need it, it usually gets filed away with our other important documents. And therein lies a problem. As members of the Church, we often consign our Baptisms to an event in the past, filing away any significance, along with the certificate we were given on the day. We look back and we say we WERE baptised, remembering the event (if we were old enough at the time) or recalling the stories we have been told about it.

The fact is that not only have we have BEEN baptised; we ARE baptised. Baptism shapes us and goes on shaping us throughout our lives, as we grow in our discipleship and live out our calling to be followers of Jesus Christ. And so our Baptism really deserves a *badge* rather than a certificate, something which makes it a living reality in the present, not just a significant event of the past.

We were presented with a badge of sorts at our Baptism, but the invisible cross on our foreheads communicates to us and to God, but not to others, that we are children of God. There has to be another badge that we wear that will announce to all who see it that we belong to Christ.

Today's feast of Christ the King serves to remind us that in baptism we are all given a share in the Kingship of Christ and that we have been sent out into the world, consecrated to proclaim that Jesus Christ is King and Lord. But a king who rules, not from a royal throne in glory and splendour, but from a cross in anguish and pain. A king who came not to establish a political sovereignty, but to save his people; a King who cares for the weak and the downtrodden; who acts justly on behalf of the powerless and those for whom no one cares for: Christ the perfect King, who acts with mercy, compassion and tenderness; who seeks out the lost and carries them home; the one whose voice they hear and gladly obey.

And so the badge we must wear as his followers is the badge of humility, self-sacrifice and service. Like Christ we are called not to be served, but to serve; to give of ourselves totally and utterly and to love as he loved. We are asked to be authentic witnesses to the Gospel, to reach out to those whose need is greater than ours, and in doing so to proclaim the kingship of Christ.

As we end this liturgical year – and next week with Advent Sunday embark on another - we are left with a challenge. To what extent do our lives reflect that of Jesus Christ the King? Have we allowed Christ the servant King to reign in our hearts? Only if his mission is our mission, his way our way, are we truly children of God and followers of Christ the universal King.