

“Above Him there was an inscription:
This is the king of the Jews...”

In thinking about what to say for the *Solemnity of Christ the King* I realized that we are faced with a real challenge as modern-day Catholics when it comes to *recognizing* the Kingship of Christ in our lives. It would be easy to preach about how Christ must be the King of our hearts and that we should love Him above all else, and leave it at that. But the question is *how* do we manifest this recognition of Christ’s Kingship in concrete terms in our present situation? Is this just a quaint feast day for Catholics or does it have some serious and real life import?

When we say that Christ is *King* we mean that He is the Lord of Creation, of all things without exception. That’s what we mean, and that has consequences, or at least it should.

Saint John says that Jesus is “*The Prince of the Kings of the Earth*” (Rev.1:5), “*The King of Kings and Lord of Lords*” (Rev. 19:16). This means that Christ, as the High King, has rights and privileges over the potentates of this world. In other words, over the political order itself. We call this the “Social Reign of Christ the King.”

Certainly, not everyone recognizes this authority – that is no secret. But what matters for us, if we wish to retain any measure of self-respect, is that *we as Christians do recognize it*. In fact, that is an essential component of Christian Faith: the acknowledgement of the Social Reign of Christ the King.

Pope Pius XI wrote that: “*If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by His precious blood, are by a new right subjected to His dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from His empire.*”

This being said, we can see how *antithetical* it is to faith in Christ to lock Him away in the church between Sundays. And we can see how outrageous it is when people who call themselves Christ’s followers deny His very teachings when the time comes to put them into practice, as if those teachings were just oddities of a peculiar religious community that have nothing to do with real life.

So often we hear of Catholics who are all too willing to suppress their Catholicism to accommodate and for the sake of those who reject Christ. It is a bewildering phenomenon, because it is not unreasonable to expect people to act on their convictions. Why then, do so many Catholics, most notoriously Catholic politicians, refuse to act on their Catholic convictions?

My friends, we live in a society that is becoming increasingly hostile to Christianity even as it chants the mantra of religious tolerance. It’s as if we’ve been lulled into inaction by this mantra.

I think that there is a real danger for Catholics to become disoriented in this milieu and to lose their spiritual bearings. We are in a pressure-cooker of sorts, which tends to produce in us viewpoints that run counter to authentic Faith in Christ.

I have had countless conversations with people who identify themselves as Catholics yet who speak more about what they *don’t* believe than about what do believe. But Christ never exalted *unbelief*. In fact He condemned it. Lack of faith is no virtue. Dissent from the Church’s teachings is not praiseworthy, it is condemnable. Jesus said: *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.* (Mark 16:15-16)

It is almost as if many of our coreligionists have converted – wittingly or unwittingly - to *another* religion. For the sake of argument I’d like to call it “the religion of *secularism*.” This expression might at first seem to be an oxymoron, but a deeper analysis reveals that in the end is not.

Secularism, on the surface, is the doctrine that seeks to exclude religious considerations from public life. It presents itself as being above the fray of interreligious controversy and purports to treat all religions as equal. It reduces religion to eccentric neighborhood social clubs and will not tolerate any real influence of religion in the public sphere. Secularism seeks to establish a society that has no reference to God - a utopia for man without the irritating interference of religion. The hypocrisy of it however, lies in this: that secularism upholds its own stance towards religion as the overarching and indeed ultimate truth; the true path to peace and harmony among men.

In contrast, in his decree proclaiming the institution of this feast of Christ the King in 1925, Pope Pius XI said that, “*The thrusting aside of Jesus Christ from private and public life has brought deleterious consequences to the world and society [because] only Christ can bring true peace.*”

The point is that if God is erased, man is erased. God grounds all moral values and His immutable law protects His creatures from exploitation. If God is not God then man becomes God. In the absence of the worship of the Creator there arises the worship of the creature. When the true religion declines, false religions arise.

Secularism is at its heart an attack on the Truth about God and man and religion – which means that it is ultimately an attack on Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.

The point is that you can't simply pretend that God doesn't exist or that man is not essentially a religious being. You can try, which is what secularism does, but all you end up with is more and more horrific distortions of man's innate religious longings. Take God out and **someone** or **something** else quickly rushes in to fill the void.

And so what I contend is that we are being asked in fact to *abandon* our faith in Christ in our hearts, even as we will be allowed to pay Him empty homage with our lips.

In this climate only those Christians who have proven themselves to be *counterfeits* will be welcomed by the secularists, while Catholics who are steadfast in their fidelity to Our Lord's Church will be greeted with howls of protest. It will only be the cleverest among us who will be able to run the gauntlet of the secular inquisitors.

This is why I say that many of our coreligionists have in essence converted to another religion, the religion of secularism. They should be reminded of Jesus' words: *Everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I will acknowledge before My Father Who is in Heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in Heaven (Mt. 10:32-33).*

I can help but think in this regard of that movie "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers." They seem on the outside to be Catholics but underneath they are really dangerous aliens bent on subjugating us. They are counterfeits and frauds. It is high time they be exposed as such.

So perhaps we should agree that fundamentalism is the problem, but call it more aptly, "secular fundamentalism."

We need to have unshakable confidence in the beauty and goodness of our Catholic Faith, because we are being offered the proposal to empty our personal worldview of all power to transform our own societies and adopt the dogmas and doctrines of godless secularism. For this reason I would say that we are being pressured to convert to another religion. As good and obedient servants to our secular masters we will be allowed to have our quaint Feast of Christ the King, we'll be allowed to call ourselves Catholic - as long as we don't really mean anything about it.

The hypocrisy of it all is that, those who see God as irrelevant do not abide by the same standard. They work day and night to change the world according to *their* personal worldviews. Supposedly these are the rules of the game, why don't they apply to faithful Catholics?

The amazing thing is not so much that the *godless* do such things, but that some among our flock are *cooperating* with them. The godless are true to their principles, while we are in denial of ours. They have finagled countless Catholics into spiritually sterilizing themselves in the name of tolerance and fidelity to the allegedly higher principles of their secular religion. Many who go by the good name of Christian have actively participated in the establishment of an anti-Christian society, a society that is moving closer and closer to a full-scale persecution of our religion.

-Father de Rosa