



## THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

### CYCLE C

2 Samuel 5: 1-3  
Colossians 1: 12-20  
Luke 23: 35-43

### GATHERING

*(An unlit candle stands on a table covered with gold cloth. Next to the candle rests a paper circle (about 12 inches in diameter). A small picture of Jesus is affixed to the center of the circle. Small multi-colored, mosaic-like pieces of construction paper are arranged around the image of Jesus. Extra pieces, enough for one for each member, are arranged around the candle.)*

We come to *the end of the year of grace* with the celebration of Christ the King, the center of our lives, the center of our world, the center of the cosmos. Last week we looked into our willingness to meet our work responsibilities and to meet them with love. How did you exercise the virtue of perseverance in your daily labors this past week? *(Members share briefly.)*

### OPENING PRAYER

*(When members have arrived, the leader lights the candle and invites the community to silently acknowledge the presence of God. After a time of quiet, the song “Rain Down” is played. It may be found on Utube.)*

Leader: Lord Jesus, here we are, your bone and your flesh. You are the center of our lives. Gather us anew to hear your word announced in our midst. Strengthen our unity in you. Transform our hearts and our lives. Empower us as witnesses to your name. Praise, honor and glory be yours, Christ, our shepherd king.

All: Amen.

### FOCUS QUESTION

Recall a time when everything seemed to be coming apart.

### SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

*(The scriptures are read aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the gospel, the facilitator invites members to mention a word, a phrase or an image from one of the readings that particularly struck them this week. Members then go on to read over the commentary and consider the questions in silence for several minutes before entering into conversation.)*

### COMMENTARY

In a time when terror threatens daily life at home and abroad, when self-serving leaders of all types regularly manipulate us, when insider companies overcharge on government contracts, when performers flaunt Superbowl-like vulgarity whenever they get the chance, it is easy to imagine that the world is in disarray.

In this world where so many things seem to be flying apart, we hear of the so-called post modern spirit. It is a spirit that regards progress as most ambiguous. Unsure of what is really true, it is a spirit that defers meaning. It is a spirit that calls into question all the overarching narratives that claim to interpret the world. In short, many in the world today wonder – Does the center hold? Is there any center?

And here we stand as people of faith at *the end of the year of grace*, celebrating the feast of Christ the King.<sup>1</sup> It was established in 1925 by Pius XI to rebut “the destructive forces of our age [*Quam Primus*]”. The forces he had in mind at the time flowed from the Russian revolution, the emergence

<sup>1</sup>

of Fascism in Italy and the rise of Hitler. Celebrated originally at the end of October, the feast has more recently been transferred to the end of the liturgical year. In the face of a world in disarray, it boldly confesses that there is an absolute, the reign of God being definitively established by Christ.

In the reading from Samuel, we see the image of king associated to that of shepherd. Like one who holds the flock together, the rule of the king is, above all, the rule of care. It is in Christ, then, that the center holds, for his work is “to reconcile all things...making peace by the blood of his cross.”

However unnerved we might be by life in a profoundly uncertain world situation, people of faith stand before Christ on this feast as the tribes of Israel stood before David, “Here we are, your bone and your flesh.” Standing in solidarity with Christ, we stand in solidarity with one another. Being reconciled in him and by him, we cooperate with him that the whole world might be reconciled in the mystery of God’s care.

Christ the King is the centerpiece and the grout in the grand mosaic in which each of us is embedded. The “firstborn from the dead”, the “firstborn of all creation”, the historic and cosmic Christ is the center that holds. In however fractured a world, “all things hold together” – in him.

## FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ How does the word, phrase or image that struck you from this week’s scriptures speak to your life or the life of the community, your family or your world these days?
- ◆ How do you hold things together when they are not together?
- ◆ How has this church year now ending been *a year of grace* for you?
- ◆ How are you impacted by the uncertainty of the cultural scene or the world situation today?
- ◆ Who/what are the centering influences in your life these days?

## RESPONSE IN ACTION

*(The leader poses the question, “What does God ask of you/us in light of our sharing of life and faith this week?” After a few minutes of reflection, the leader invites conversation in response to the question.)*

- ◆ Set aside twenty minutes some day this week to center yourself. Breathe in and out slowly. As you breathe in say, “Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God....” As you breathe out, say, “Have mercy on me, a sinner.”
- ◆ At home or at work or when you are with your friends, be attentive to someone who is having trouble holding things together. Be a centering influence for the person, helping him/her get in touch with what is really important.
- ◆ Identify one of the forms of electronic media that consumes your time. Commit to reducing the amount of non-work related time you dedicate to it this week. Limit your time on Twitter, Facebook and other social media. Reduce the number of Text messages. Dedicate the time you save to looking *inward* and *upward*.

## CLOSING PRAYER AND SENDING FORTH

*(A selection of instrumental music is played.)*

Leader: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

All: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Leader: I rejoiced because they said to me,

“We will go up to the house of the LORD.”  
And now we have set foot  
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

All: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Leader: Jerusalem, built as a city  
with compact unity.  
To it the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the LORD.

All: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Leader: According to the decree for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,  
seats for the house of David.

All: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Psalm 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5

*(The leader draws attention to the mosaic on the table and speaks of Christ as the center and grout of the mosaic. Acknowledging that embedded in Christ, we also belong to one another, the leader invites members to add a piece to the mosaic to help bring it to completion. The leader invites prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer; members respond, "Make peace among us Lord, through the blood of your cross." The session concludes with the praying of the Lord's Prayer and the exchange of a sign of peace.)*

***Special Note:** At the close of this session or the next, the community takes about fifteen minutes for some evaluation. The leader for this session facilitates the community coming to a decision about this matter. The evaluative conversation has two dimensions: 1.) How are we doing as a group? How well are we doing with listening? Does everyone have a chance to speak? 2.) How are we doing as a small church community? What is the quality of our conversation over the scriptures? What is the strength of our prayer? How well connected to one another are we as members of one body in Christ? What difference does our coming together make when we are apart? What experience of service/mission flows from our being a small church community? In sum, what is going well? What can we do to deepen our experience of being a small church community?*