

# CHRIST, PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING

**Christ the King**  
**November 20, 1977**

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

My dear sisters and brothers.

The people who are on pilgrimage on this earth, who are guided by the Holy Spirit and who are led by their divine leader, Christ --- this people comes to the conclusion of the Liturgical Year. It is as though we have reached one goal on our pilgrimage. Throughout these past twelve months the Liturgical Year has unfolded for us the personality of our king and the characteristics of his kingdom. Therefore at this point in time all of us who glory in the name of Christian ought to be aware of the person whom we follow, Christ the King. We also ought to be even more aware of the characteristics of his kingdom into which we have been gathered together and admitted through Baptism.

This kingdom and this king are incarnated in this world. His kingdom is a kingdom for real women and men who live in history, in this present time. Therefore as we come to the end of this Liturgical Year 1977 I am pleased that we have undertaken our pilgrimage through the concrete events of our history, our society, our family, as well as our own personal concerns. This is the reason why I provide a framework for the Sunday homily even though I know that perhaps I abuse your time. I thank you for listening to me and I want you to know that this framework is necessary so that the gospel of the Kingdom of God feels like our gospel, feels like the gospel of El Salvador that takes into consideration the realities in which the Kingdom of God becomes real and is lived here in El Salvador in 1977. For example, this week could be characterized by an environment of violence and fear. It would be good to briefly analyze the characteristics of this violence and fear so that, if possible, we can discover its origins. Men and women hinder the realization of the Kingdom of God in the world. Christ does not want violence. Christ does not want terror. Christ does not want an environment of mutual distrust, accusations and slanders. These are obstacles to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

## **Events of the week**

During this past week a dangerous interpretation has been given to the assassination in which Don Raúl Molina Cañas was killed. The Supreme Court has the role of answering this question. These crimes must be uncovered otherwise people are falsely accused and this in turn justifies the repression of people who have no culpability in these matters. So many crimes must be investigated so that dangerous ambiguities can be avoided --- among which is an attempt to involve the sacred mission of the Church in these crimes.

I also believe that there has been a scandalous desecration of the grief and sorrow surrounding this assassination. The Church, as mother, expressed her solidarity with the grieving family and with those who feel the pain of separation from a loved one. I said this

during the funeral Mass but I am not in agreement with those who use this painful situation to incite others to violence. By their symbols I know the group that was stirring up this demonstration.<sup>1</sup> This group is characterized by what we would call fanaticism and this is very dangerous. A few days before this, when I accompanied the body of a *campesino* to his burial place, I told the people that silence during a time of sorrow is more comforting. If the voice of the Church is not listened to, please do not blame the preaching of the Church for the events that then occur when the passions of people are stirred up --- even though these same people value the pain and anguish of the family and of the deceased.

I also want to denounce the shameless provocation of repression against the cries of the people. On at least one occasion I have told you that today more than ever before we need the gift of the Holy Spirit that is called the gift of discernment --- to discern, to distinguish between that which is good and that which is evil. Do not focus on who speaks but rather focus on what is being said. The cries for justice were the cries of the people in Egypt and the Bible says: *I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers* (a). God listens when the people cry out for justice, charity, order and fraternity. Therefore all these cries should not be repressed but discerned. The cries that do not deserve to be heard should be repressed. They are the voices that cry out on behalf of crime and abduction and so many other numerous offenses that have remained unpunished. Yes, these cries should be repressed wherever they are found, even among soldiers. Abuses must be punished. Therefore I call upon the justice of our country to discern these cries and not simply repress them without making any distinctions. Listen to what is just! Listen to the cries of the just because they ought to be answered with justice and responded to primarily by those who have political power and wealth! These individuals could hear so many cries and make so many people happy if they would only cease to take advantage of these situations in order to incite repression at any price.

Because of this repression an unjust campaign of defamation has been launched against the Church. Once again the Church protests because her preaching is not about hatred or violence. I have repeated a thousand times: like Christ our Lord (b), my word has resonated in public and I challenge anyone to tell me that I have incited people to vengeance, hatred or violence. The voice of the Church has always been the voice of the gospel --- it can be nothing else. Many times this gospel touches the open wounds of society and it is natural that it should sting and cause pain. But this is the voice of the gospel and the response should not be one of defamation against the Church's message because this message must be that of Christ, the King.

My dear sisters and brothers, in this environment in which we find ourselves at this time of gathering in the harvest from the fields, the Church, as the representative of God on earth, calls people to praise the Lord who provides rain for our coffee crops and makes our cotton appear as snow in these tropical lands and, to use the words of the poet, our sugar cane appears as *blood that gives honey*.<sup>2</sup> How beautiful is our land! Instead of adapting an attitude that causes disunity, I call upon everyone to adapt an attitude of understanding --- the owners of the coffee, cotton, sugar cane and other crops that our land provides as well as those who are going to participate in the harvesting of these crops. All are children of God, blessed with this beautiful land. We need to show a little love to one another --- nothing more --- we must move beyond the simple application of the law. The law (the minimum wage law or whatever name you want to give to it) is not enough. Indeed, there is truth in the saying: *those who create the law also create the trap*. There are many injustices when the law is fulfilled without love. Love is the soul of Christian justice. Love gives a divine

meaning to the laws of human beings. Without love laws become simply an appendix, something extra.

Therefore, my sisters and brothers, if there are no laws then there must be dialogue and understanding and fraternity. During the time of harvesting in our fields, we do not want to be saddened by news of violence. The Church calls people to use common sense, to be understanding and loving toward one another. The Church does not believe in violent solutions. She believes only in one form of violence, that of Christ who was nailed to the cross. That is how today's gospel reading shows Christ --- he takes upon himself all the violence of hatred and misunderstanding so that we, women and men, might forgive one another, love one another and feel that we are sisters and brothers.

In light of Christ the King I also want to give you some further information about the event that I spoke to you about last Sunday: the disappearance of José Justo Mejía in Dulce Nombre de María. This week I was horrified when I saw his wife and nine small children. She came to tell me that when his body was found, there were signs that he had been tortured. Now she and her nine children are alone and unprotected. I believe that those persons who have committed this crime have an obligation of restitution. It is necessary that so many families, like this one, families that have experienced the cruel death of a loved one --- these families should receive some form of assistance. The criminals who have caused this situation have an obligation in conscience to help sustain these families.

On this feast of Christ the King it is with great satisfaction that I inform you that the strike in the Leon factory was resolved during the initial dialogue. Msgr. Urioste, the Church's representative, expressed his admiration for the openness of both sides and I want to congratulate them and greet them. On the other hand, I am saddened that the strike at Inca de Santa Ana has not been resolved. The Church's mediator has denounced the fact that there is a lack of understanding and people have become hardened and stubborn in their positions. My sisters and brothers, dialogue should not be characterized by defending the position that one brings to the table. Rather dialogue should be characterized by poverty: one goes as a poor person to find among others the truth and the solution. If both sides in a conflict enter into dialogue to defend their position, then they will leave in the same situation as when they entered. During this week the Lord desired to enlighten these labor conflicts so that he could receive the treasure that is found in sincere dialogue.

### **News of the Church**

Today in the reading from Saint Paul, we are presented with the figure of Christ the King who is not only king of the universe, but also, and especially, the head of the Church. (c) As members of this Church that here is concretely called the Archdiocese of San Salvador we want to thank Christ the King for this good news (the resolution of the labor conflicts) and offer him homage on this day when we remember his reign as king. We offer this homage as a Church that struggles each day to live more authentically as Church, as the body of the divine leader. In this same line of thought I want to inform you about and ask you to pray, in the first place, for the priests. For the first time each vicariate, that is, each group of parishes, has organized a spiritual retreat. This will be a week of intense reflection during which time the priests will review and evaluate their work. During this hour of sincere reflection I ask all of you, especially those of you who are not satisfied with our clergy, to call upon the Lord so that the Spirit of God might enable these priests to be faithful to their mission. From my perspective I want to tell you that every priest that is ministering in communion with the

bishop is an authentic representative of Christ's message. Let us try to understand our priests and dialogue with them when we are not in agreement with certain issues. Let us not resort to defaming them and calling them communists. I want to be made aware of concrete cases. I want Father so and so to be denounced because during the celebration of the Eucharist he said such and such that is not in accord with the gospel. I am the one who is responsible to hold the priests accountable in these matters and I feel that at this time, when our beloved priests are engaged in sincere reflection, they are seeking, in the light of divine revelation, the strength and guidance to continue their mission on earth. Let us accompany them with our prayers and I ask all the People of God to pray frequently for our beloved priests during these days of their spiritual retreat.

Some more good news concerning our priests. On December 10th at 10:00am here in the Cathedral, we are going to ordain two new priests: the deacons Héctor Figueroa and Jorge Benavides --- two men that will join our presbyterate. Blessed be God!

At the same time I must also share with you some sad news. A priest who is not allowed to exercise his ministry, who is not in communion with his bishop, has attempted to take over the parish in Quezaltepeque and has abused the true pastor, Father Roberto, who is in communion with the bishop. Here I want to say very clearly to the people in Quezaltepeque that the authentic pastor is Father Roberto and those who minister with him are building up the Church there. The political groups that have gathered around Father Quinteros are seeking other interests and are not concerned about building up the Church.<sup>3</sup> I want to thank the vicar, Father Nieto, the religious women and the laity who are in communion with the Church for having joined together with courage and conviction and with a true hierarchical understanding of the Church. God will bless this parish that today must confront this new trial.

This week in the seminary, the hope of the Church, a retreat was held as the academic year came to a conclusion. It was beautiful to see these young men, studying philosophy and theology, analyze their journey as young men who aspire to the priesthood --- analyze this journey in light of divine revelation and the spirituality of the priesthood. Yesterday there was a very emotional moment: in the seminary chapel, after having spent some time reflecting with their families, some parents gave thanks to God as the academic year concluded. It was beautiful to see the seminarians leaving the seminary surrounded by their families. It is clear that these families understand that the primary seminary is the family. Indeed it is from these Christian families that we have hope for new and good vocations. Fifty-two young men have been accepted into the minor seminary --- something that we never expected. In Chalatenango a pre-seminary has been organized to gather together from that region the young men who are interested in the priesthood. This center will also offer formation to the religious women and laity who are committed to the Archdiocesan pastoral plan in the Department of Chalatenango.

Finally my sisters and brothers, let us look at our communities. In Santa Tecla in La Casa de San Vicente de Paul the people are celebrating a novena in honor of the Miraculous Medal and I want to thank the Daughters of Charity for the attention that they have given to praying for the priests and the bishop. On Wednesday in San Marcos, bibles were given to the catechumenate group. I ask your forgiveness for not being able to accompany you as I had promised. On the same afternoon bibles were given to the members of a group that are studying the Scriptures in Panchimalco. In Ilopango there was a beautiful youth gathering that came to the conclusion that the renewal of the world could not be brought to a realization until each person decided to renew themselves interiorly. We have continually said the same

thing: the renewal of the world does not depend on new structures but on the sincere conversion of the individual. In the Academia de San Vicente de Paul there was a beautiful confirmation ceremony of young women and men. I also received an emotional letter from some elderly people who told me that they were offering all the aches and pains of their old age for the Church that ministers in El Salvador. In La Palma a very beautiful bulletin has been published that is called *La voz del Espiritu* (The voice of the Spirit). I want to thank the pastor for the support that he has given to the words of the bishop --- always calling people to listen to the voice of the bishop. I was also visited by members of the construction committee in Suchitoto who are involved in restoring the façade of the church. They were asking the communities to help them. I also received a generous offering from the people in the canton of Pepeshtenango. May God reward you!

My sisters and brothers, I want to announce that according to our tradition, this Thursday, the third Thursday of the month, we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day. The midday Mass here in the cathedral will be offered for the intention of giving thanks to God for all the blessings that we have received. I ask those who are unable to come to Mass to lift up your hearts to God and give thanks for all the good things that God has done for us. Finally I want to let you know that as usual we will have the contest for the construction of Nativity scenes. You can register in La Libería Cultural Católica or La Libería Ercilla. I invite the pastors to promote this contest and submit the names of those persons who win this contest in your parishes so that on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Epiphany, we can award the people who have made the best Nativity scenes in San Salvador and the surrounding town and villages.

My sisters and brothers, as you can see our framework is made up of many historical and ecclesial realities and it is in the midst of these realities that we have proclaimed the Word of God. The first reading reminds us of the earthly origins of the Christ, the King, the Son of David. At a solemn moment in the history of Israel, the people came together in Hebron and in the name of the people David was anointed and proclaimed as their king and shepherd. This was the beginning of the Davidic dynasty and Christ, the true king, was born as a descendent of David. When the gospel proclaims Jesus as the Son of David, they are in fact acclaiming him as the king of Israel. (d) The second reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians, chapter 1 from 12 to 20, is beautiful theology about the divine origins of this Son of God who became man and therefore is the true beginning and sustainer of all things, including, of course, the Church. The gospel presents us with the throne of this king: the cross --- and in the mist of ridicule this king dies. Even though the persecutors of Jesus were unable to discover his real identity, a repentant criminal became aware of his identity: *Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom* (Luke 23:42). Jesus responds: *This very day, even though you see me in pain here on the cross, yet I am the king who has conquered the world through the suffering of the cross. This very day you will be with me in Paradise* (e).

### **Christ, the prophet**

My sisters and brothers, in light of these readings we are reminded about the beautiful perspective of the Liturgical Year and we discover the characteristics of this kingdom and this king. A new Liturgical Year begins next Sunday: the Advent Season, a time of preparation for Christmas. The Christmas season then continues until the feast of the Epiphany. The feasts of Christmas and the Epiphany proclaim to us that the child who was born in Bethlehem came to initiate a kingdom on this earth. It is true that this child has come as a human being and therefore we see that the characteristic of the Kingdom of Christ is the

Word who became flesh (f) --- the Word is the truth that is proclaimed by a prophet. Christ is a prophet. His royalty is prophetic. He is a king who speaks the Word of God and gives us this message: *Go into the whole world and proclaim that which I have taught you* (g).

These words that I am preaching here in the cathedral of San Salvador and that with the assistance of the microphones of La Voz Panamericana<sup>4</sup> are being communicated to the various communities that have come together to reflect with us --- these words are the prophetic voice of the reign of God.

It is Christ the King who is speaking as a prophet and proclaiming the truths of the Kingdom of God, the beatitudes of the Kingdom, the darkness of sin, and the denunciations of injustice so that in the present era people might purify themselves and become worthy of this kingdom of truth. Jesus does not want people who are liars. When Jesus stands before Pilate he is asked: *Are you the king of the Jews?* (h). Jesus responds affirmatively and immediately declares that his kingdom is a kingdom of truth: *For this was I born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth* (i). The powerful Pilate was skeptical because he did not believe in the truth, just as many people today do not believe in the truth. Thus Pilate poses this question to Jesus: *What is truth?* (j). My sisters and brothers, many people live and have turned their backs on the truth and have no appreciation of the truth. Therefore as we conclude the Liturgical Year I am happy that the people have understood that the Kingdom of God that is proclaimed is a kingdom of truth. People have reflected on the situation and the actions of the Archbishop and his priests and have affirmed the fact that the Church has been faithful to the truth, faithful to the Kingdom of God, faithful to the kingdom of truth, and faithful to the kingdom of the prophet.

As the feast of the Epiphany concludes, we begin Ordinary Time. There are thirty-four weeks in the season of Ordinary Time that is interrupted by the seasons of Lent and Easter. Then after the feast of Pentecost, this long season of Ordinary Time continues until its conclusion with the feast of Christ the King. As we have journeyed and reflected together here in the Cathedral, we have become aware of the fact that the long season of Ordinary Time presents us with the teachings of Christ: his doctrine, his way of thinking and his expectations of women and men. The gospel that was chosen for this year, the gospel of Saint Luke, is most beautiful because we have been presented with Jesus' teaching as he journeys towards Jerusalem. Now he has arrived on the heights of Jerusalem where Calvary is located. Jesus is crucified, but his goal and journey has involved us in the teachings of the Master. We have seen a prophet who taught people the beatitudes, forgiveness, love and understanding. My sisters and brothers, the gospel is the only lighted path that enables us to find the solution to all our problems.

### **Christ, the priest**

The interruption that was occasioned by Lent and Holy Week and Easter provides us with another characteristic of this Kingdom of God, namely, the kingdom is a priestly kingdom. Christ is the Son of God who became incarnate, who became man in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary. He unites the divine nature to human nature that he received from Mary and the result of these two natures is Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man. As man Jesus was anointed priest by the God the Father and by the Holy Spirit.

Mary conceived in her womb a God who became man and at the same time became a priest and mediated on behalf of human causes. For this reason Mary is also the Mother of the Church. On this feast of Christ the King, our eyes turn once again toward the Virgin

Mary, the Mother of Christ, the Mother of the King, the mother of the prophet, and the mother of the eternal priest. As priest, Christ goes up silently to Jerusalem for he had already spoken and taught us by his words. Now as an example he hands himself over silently, once and forever as the priest. Christ dies on the cross and dies as a priest --- a priest who gives his life for the glory of God and the salvation of all women and men.

The kingdom of God can not be reflected on without taking into consideration this great salvific and messianic concept. When the prophets of the Old Testament announced the coming of Christ they often confused a dual perspective: the messianic-temporal perspective of Christ and the eschatological, eternal perspective where the kingdom of Christ would come to its fulfillment and fullness. In other words, Christ's entrance into the world as priest gives a sacred meaning to creation and orients all of creation toward God, the Creator. The incarnate Christ, having been born and living among human beings, is God who gives history and the universe its divine meaning and its true meaning.

Christ, priest and redeemer. We are living in this first phase of the kingdom --- a phase which began with the coming of Christ twenty centuries ago and which will continue until the end of world (and we do not know when this world will come to an end). The time of the arrival of the end of the world is not important but what is most important is that we are living in this phase of the kingdom when the promises of the Old Testament have become a reality in the King who was born of the Virgin Mary. This King lives forever because he died on the cross and rose. He rose and is filled with life and he offers this same life to the people who follow him. This kingdom of truth and life is a priestly kingdom. All sinners find in Christ forgiveness because his blood, which was shed on the cross, is the sacrifice that obtained forgiveness for all crimes and offenses. Therefore, when we denounce the sins that stain our history, we call sinners to conversion. We never call the victims of these crimes to vengeance --- vengeance is not Christian --- rather we call those who have committed these crimes to change their ways because Jesus has died for them and is waiting to forgive them.

Who could deny the fact that this Word of the eternal priest, Christ the King, enters those places where the criminal hands of so many persons are hidden, those places where people abide --- people who have been responsible for the mysterious disappearance and death of so many of our sisters and brothers? The Word enters these places and wants to touch these individuals with the grace of God: change your way of life and return to this kingdom of love where these bloody events have no place! In this first phase of the kingdom Christ, as priest, is giving us the opportunity to change our ways and this will continue until the time of our death, the time when Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

### **Christ, the king**

Then as history comes to a conclusion the priestly, messianic, and temporal mission of Christ will also come to a conclusion and the final judgment will begin. Saint Matthew, the evangelist, describes this event as he speaks about the judgment of nations. To those on his right he will say: *Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world --- a kingdom that I established on earth and that I now hand over to the Father so that he might be all things to all people (k).*

My sisters and brothers I tell all of you that on that day we will be found on the right hand of the Judge to be called *blessed of the Father* because of the priestly forgiveness of Christ. On the other hand, the reprobate, those who have not taken advantage of Jesus' mercy, those

who instead of listening to the Church's voice of mercy have slandered and defamed her, those who have placed walls around the kingdom of God, those who have sinned against the Holy Spirit, those who have hindered the kingdom of Christ on earth, if they do not change their ways then their sentence is very clear because they will be judged and Christ will say: *Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food. I was thirsty and you have me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing. I was imprisoned, one of the disappeared, one of those who had been assassinated and you gave me no mercy.* Surprised, these ones will ask: *When Lord?* The Lord will say: *When you abused one of these least sisters and brothers, you abused me (l).*

My sisters and brothers, if we only realized that during this messianic temporal phase of the Kingdom of God Christ becomes incarnate in every person then we would respect and love ourselves and others and this exploitation of one person by another would disappear. With Christ there are no social classes. Christ is all things to all people including the most ragged and the richest person. Christ is in all people and therefore it is not just to hate the rich or despise the poor because Christ wishes to establish his law of love on this earth. This is the temporal kingdom of God. When Jesus tells Pilate that *my kingdom does not belong to this world (m)*, when he flees from the crowds that wanted to make his king, (n) he does this not because he does not have power over the material things of this world but rather because he wants people to administer these goods according to his will. The legislator, government official, and judge is not the owner of the nation or the owner of the laws and justice. Rather they are administrators of the reign of Christ and must administer justice and orient the government and the common good according to the ideals of the just king, the king of love, the king of harmony. If a government official does not fulfill this supreme law of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, he will receive a severe punishment because he punished and abused a whole nation and therefore he will be cast into the eternal fires.

My sisters and brothers, we have been talking about history in light of Christ the King. When the end of time arrives, that is, when the time of the eschatological kingdom arrives (last Sunday I explained the meaning of this concept) and when those who have walked with Jesus toward the kingdom of heaven rejoice in eternal happiness while the reprobate suffer eternal punishment, the Church will rejoice for having initiated the kingdom of God on earth and the Divine Shepherd will gather together all these people and they will be found among those people who have been saved.

I am not saying that only those men and women who are members of this Church will be saved. In the Mass we prayed: *Oh God, you extended your merciful hand so that everyone who looks for you might find you.*<sup>5</sup> On one occasion I explained to you that there are many religions that are not Christian and even though the people who practice these religions have not known Christ, they live their lives with irreproachable moral standards (very often they live better lives than many Christians) and they will be saved while some Christians (because it is not enough to be members of the Catholic Church which is the kingdom of Christ) who are members of the Catholic Church but living sinful lives and therefore are not part of the heart of the Church. (o) Those who are outside the geographical and visible boundaries of the hierarchical Church but fulfill the law of God because of an enlightenment by Christ which mysteriously comes to them --- these individuals are in the heart of the Church and are often better than many persons who live as members of the Church but do not live according to the Church's teaching.



## **A prophetic, priestly and royal people**

Therefore, my sisters and brothers, in the light of Christ the King let us examine ourselves according to these three characteristics of Jesus: prophet, priest and king. These are characteristics that have been given to us through baptism so that we might collaborate with Christ. Christ the priest --- all Christians have to work together so that the world might be consecrated to God. Parents, young people, children, and everyone who has been baptized ought to experience themselves as part of this priestly people and ought to make their homes, businesses, farms, and workshops places where the presence of Christ comes alive.

How beautiful will be the day when all the baptized understand that their work and their job is priestly work. Just as I celebrate Mass at this altar, so each carpenter celebrates Mass at his workbench, and each metalworker, each professional, each doctor with the scalpel, the market woman at her stand --- each one of these people is performing a priestly office! How many cabdrivers, (and I know they are listening to this message in their cabs) --- you are a priest at the wheel, my friend, if you work with honesty, consecrating that taxi of yours to God and bearing a message of peace and love to the passengers who ride in your cab. My sisters and brothers, how much good could be done if instead of defaming and discrediting and hating, we worked together as one priestly people and oriented the created things of nature toward God?

Christ has made us participants in his mission of communicating the Word and his message. The father of a family is priest and prophet in his home. He has to correct and guide his family. The professional and the owner of a factory also participates in this prophetic mission of Christ. My sisters and brothers, there is no one here in the cathedral, no one listening to me on the radio who does not also participate in this prophetic mission of announcing Christ and denouncing the sins against the kingdom of God and bringing the whole world to Christ.

Finally we wish to speak about the function of Christ the King. His royalty refers to a social kingdom, a kingdom of Christian justice, love and peace. Everyone has to work together so that the God-created goods, the harvests that are now being gathered up, the laws and social, political, and economic structures respect the rights of the children of God. In this way the kingdom of God will truly become a reality that opens channels for the preaching of the gospel.

Thank you, my sisters and brothers, for listening to me and for reflecting together on this word. I invite you to continue to celebrate this Mass as a people intimately united together before the invisible presence of Christ. Christ is not seen in the host or the chalice, but he is present there. For a Christian this is enough --- it is enough to know that Christ is present there in the host and chalice. Christ is also present in the midst of this Christian society, in the midst of the base communities of faith, and wherever people have gathered together to reflect on the Word --- there is Christ. My sisters and brothers, Christ is among us here in the cathedral. Christ lives! Let us place our trust in him! Let us not be discouraged! It is true that I have told you at the beginning that we have lived a week in which a new phase of terror and fear and violence has begun --- and God does not want any of these realities to become a part of our lives. Christians do not allow their lives to be ruled by fear but live with the certitude in their hearts that Christ lives! Christ lives and continues to offer us the solutions to our problems! Let us ask our God to open our ears! Let us beg our God to not allow us to become persecutors of his message! Let us listen to and live this message. Let us not point

out in others the things that they do wrong! Let us look at ourselves and reflect on whether we have lived as true followers of Christ the Prophet, Christ the Priest, and Christ the King!

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<sup>1</sup> Right-wing groups shouted accusations against the Church during the funeral of Raúl Molina Cañas and demanded the government intervene with greater strength. See editorial of *Orientación*, 20 November 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Reference to the Salvadoran poet Alfredo Espino who, in his poem *Cañal en flor*, writes: “Y qué triste la molienda / aunque vuele por la hacienda / da la alegría el tropel, / porque destrozan entrañas / los trapiches, y las cañas.../vierten lágrimas de miel”.

<sup>3</sup> Fr An tonio Pineda Quinteros didn't accept the appointment of a new parish priest in Quetzaltepeque and refused to hand over the parish. He went to the extreme of excommunicating Archbishop Romero, an act much used by the extreme right-wing groups in their campaign against him. For example, the review *La Opinión* for November 1977, headlined: “Monsignor Romero excommunicated. The parish priest of Quezaltepeque accuses the Archbishop of preaching hatred.”

<sup>4</sup> Radio of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, better known as YSAX.

<sup>5</sup> Eucharistic Prayer 4.

*Margin References* (a) Ex 3,9: (b) Jn 18,20-21: (c) Col 1,18: (d) Mt 21,9: (e) Lk 23,42-43: (f) Jn 1,14: (g) Mk 16,15: (h) Jn 18,33: (i) Jn 18,37: (j) Jn 18,38: (k) Mt 25,34: (l) Mt 25,41-45: (m) Jn 18,36: (n) Jn 6,15: (o) LG 16.