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# CHRIST: PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

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

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

Dear sisters and brothers.

This pilgrim people on earth, marching under the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord and their divine leader, Christ, king of nations, now reaches the end of the liturgical year. It is as though we have reached a goal in our pilgrimage. The liturgical year is the unfolding of the personality of our king and the characteristics of his kingdom over twelve months. By this time, therefore, all of us who glory in the name of Christian should be aware of the person whom we follow, Christ the King, and of the characteristics of his kingdom to which he has called us and introduced us through baptism.

This kingdom and this king are well incarnated in this world. His kingdom is a kingdom for the flesh-and-blood women and men of history. Thus, as we come to the end of this liturgical year 1977, I am pleased that during our pilgrim journey we have been examining the concrete events of our history, our society, our families, and our personal concerns. That is why I provide a framework to the homily of each Sunday, even if I take up too much of your time. I thank you for your patience in listening to me because this framework is necessary in order to make the Gospel of God's kingdom feel like our own Salvadoran Gospel and to make us aware that the kingdom of God develops and comes alive here in El Salvador in these realities of 1977. For example, we might describe this past week as having a quality of violence and fear, and we would do well to analyze the characteristics of this violence and this fear and to trace them back, if possible, to their origins. It is we humans who create the obstacles to 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 calumnies. These are obstacles to the kingdom of Christ.

### **Events of the week**

This week a dangerous interpretation has been given to a murder. Who killed Don Raúl Molina Cañas? This is for the Supreme Court to determine. These crimes should not be just unresolved so that people assign blame and find reasons to demand repression against persons who perhaps are not to blame at all. All these crimes must be investigated so that dangerous ambiguities can be avoided—including attempts to implicate even the sacred mission of the church.

I believe that in the case of this murder there has also been a scandalous desecration of people's grief. As I said at the funeral, the church as mother expresses her solidarity with the grieving family and with those who feel the pain of separation from a loved one. But the church does not agree with using a painful situation to incite people to violence. By its symbols I recognize the group that was stirring up that demonstration.<sup>1</sup> It is a group known for its almost fanatical exaggeration, and it is dangerous. A few days before this, when people were leaving here to bury a *campesino* who had also been murdered, I told the people that silence in times of sorrow is much more moving. If afterwards people pay no heed to the serene voice of the church, do not blame the church's preaching for what happens when passions are stirred up by those who take advantage of the pain and anguish of the family of the deceased.

I also want to denounce the rash proposal to use repression against the cries of the people. I already told you once that today, more than ever before, we need the gift of the Holy Spirit that is called the gift of discernment. We need to discern, to distinguish between what is good and what is evil. Focus not on who is saying something, but on what is being said. The people in Egypt cried out demanding justice, and in the Bible God responded, «The cry of the people has reached my ears» (Exod 3:9). God hears when the people cry out for more justice, more charity, more order, more fraternity. It is not, then, a matter of repressing every cry but of discerning what each cry means. The cries that do not deserve to be heard should be repressed. They are the voices of crime and abduction and the countless offenses that have remained unpunished. Yes, these cries should be repressed wherever they are found, even if in the army. Abuses must be punished. Therefore, I call upon the justice of our country to discern and not simply repress indiscriminately. Listen to what is just! Listen to the just demands that should be answered with justice, principally by those who control political power and wealth. They have the ability to hear so many cries and make so many people happy—if only they would stop scheming in order to foment repression at any price!

This situation has resulted in an unjust campaign of defamation against the church. Once again the church protests because her preaching does not promote hatred or violence. I have repeated a thousand times, and my word has resounded in public like that of Christ our Lord (John 18:20-21). I challenge anyone to accuse me of inciting 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 open wounds so it is natural that it should sting and cause pain. But it *is* the voice of the Gospel, and the response to it should not be maligning the church's message, which can only be that of Christ the King.

We find ourselves now, dear sisters and brothers, in this change of seasons when the work of harvesting the crops is before us, and so the church as the representative of God on earth summons people to praise the Lord who provides that shower of rubies in our coffee crops, those snowfalls in our tropical lands which are the cotton fields, and that sugar cane which, when cut, bleeds honey instead of blood, as our poet said.<sup>2</sup> How

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<sup>1</sup> Right-wing groups shouted accusations against the church during the funeral of Raúl Molina Cañas and

<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 / de la alegría el tropel, / porque destrozan entrañas / los

beautiful is our land! Instead of letting all this plenty lead to discord, I call upon everyone to adopt an attitude of understanding: both the owners of the coffee plantations, cotton fields, sugar cane, and other produce of the earth and the workers who collaborate in reaping and gathering in those crops. Both owners and workers are children of God, blessed with this generous land. We need to show a little love, nothing more. Laws and legalisms are not enough, whether they regulate minimum wages or anything else. Indeed, there is great truth in that saying: «With every law there is a trap». There are many injustices when the law is observed without love. Love is the soul of Christian justice. Love is what gives divine meaning to the laws of human beings. Without love laws are useless.

Therefore, sisters and brothers, whatever the laws, let there be dialogue, let there be understanding, let there be fraternity. During this harvest time in our fields let there be no acts of violence that we will lament. The church calls upon everyone to be reasonable, understanding, and loving. She does not believe in violent solutions. The church believes only in one form of violence, that of Christ who was nailed to the cross. That is how today's gospel reading presents him. Christ wanted to take on himself all the violence of hatred and misunderstanding so that we might forgive one another, love one another, and feel that we are truly sisters and brothers.

Last Sunday I informed you, in the light of Christ the King, about the disappearance of José Justo Mejía in Dulce Nombre de María. This week I was horrified when I met with his wife and nine small children. She came to tell me that they found him dead and with signs of torture. Now she and those children are alone and unprotected. I believe that anyone who commits a crime of that nature has an obligation to make restitution. Assistance must be given to all the homes like this one that have been left destitute. The criminals who leave families in this desperate situation are obliged in conscience to help sustain these families.

On this feast of Christ the King I am able to inform you with great satisfaction that the strike in the León factory was resolved during the initial dialogue. Monsignor Urioste, the church's representative, expressed his admiration for the openness of both sides, and I want to congratulate and thank the negotiators. On the other hand, I am saddened that the strike at the INCA factory in Santa Ana is still unresolved. The church's mediator complains that there is a lack of understanding; instead, there is hardness and stubbornness. My sisters and brothers, dialogue should not be characterized just by defending one's own position. Rather, dialogue is characterized by poverty: one goes as a poor person to find between the two sides the truth and the solution. If both sides in a conflict defend only their own positions, then they will leave in the same condition as when they entered. During this week may the Lord illumine these social conflicts and reward them with the richness that is found in sincere dialogue.

## **News of the church**

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trapiches, y las cañas.../¡vierten lágrimas de miel!» [And how sad the milling / though it flies through the hacienda / the crowd feels joy / because the mills crush entrails / and the canes spill tears of honey!]

Today in the reading from Saint Paul, Christ the King is presented to us not only as king of the universe but also, and especially, as head of the church (Col 1:18). As members of this church, called here concretely the Archdiocese of San Salvador, we want to thank Christ the King for this news of the church and offer it as homage on this day when we commemorate his reign. We offer the homage of this church that struggles each day to live more authentically as church, as the Body of that divine head. In this regard I inform you and ask your prayers first of all for the priests. For the first time ever, each vicariate, that is, each group of pastors, has organized a spiritual retreat. This is a week of intense reflection during which the priests review and evaluate their work. While they are engaged in this sincere reflection I ask all of you, especially those who are not satisfied with our clergy, to pray earnestly to the Lord so that the Spirit of the Lord will help our priests be faithful to their true mission. For my part, I want to tell you that every priest who is working 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 them on certain issues. Let us not defame them en masse by calling them «communists» or «revolutionaries». If there is any complaint, I want concrete cases. It should take the form: «Father So-and-so said such-and-such during Mass on this date, and what he said is not in accord with the Gospel». I am the one responsible for holding the priests accountable. I believe, sisters and brothers, that during this period of sincere reflection our priests will be seeking in the light of divine revelation the strength and guidance to continue their mission on earth. We accompany them with our prayers, and I ask all of you as the people of God to pray often for our beloved priests during these days of reflection.

Some more good news concerning our priests. On December 10 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning here in the cathedral we are going to ordain two new priests, the deacons Héctor Figueroa and Jorge Benavides. These two will add new force to our presbyterate. Blessed be God!

At the same time I share with you some sad news about a priest. It happens that a priest who is not in communion with the bishop has attempted to take over the parish in Quezaltepeque, and he has attacked the true pastor, Father Roberto, who is in communion with the bishop. From here I make my voice heard in Quezaltepeque to tell them that the authentic pastor is Father Roberto, and the people working with him are the ones building up the church. The political band that has gathered around Father Quinteros is seeking other interests; they are not 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 joining together with courage and conviction; they have a true hierarchical understanding of the church. God will bless this parish that today is being sorely tested.

This week, as the academic year came to a close, a retreat was held in the seminary, the hope of the church. It was beautiful to see these young students of philosophy and theology analyze their journey toward priesthood in the light of divine

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<sup>3</sup> Father Antonio Pineda Quinteros rejected the appointment of a new parish priest in Quetzaltepeque and refused to hand over the parish. Pineda 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: «Archbishop Romero Excommunicated. The Parish Priest of Quezaltepeque Accuses the Archbishop of Preaching Hatred».

revelation and priestly spirituality. Yesterday there was a very emotional moment: after reflecting with their families and parents in the seminary chapel, the young men gave thanks to God as the academic year concluded. It was beautiful to see each seminarian leave the seminary surrounded by his family. How well understood it is that the first seminary is the family! It is from these solid Christian families that we have hope for good new vocations. Fifty-two students are now attending the minor seminary, something we never expected, and many are near to graduation. In Chalatenango a pre-seminary has been organized to bring together from that region the young men who want to finish their schooling and study for the priesthood. This center will also offer formation to the religious women and laity who are committed to the pastoral work of the archdiocese in the department of Chalatenango.

Finally, sisters and brothers, let us look at our communities. At the Casa San Vicente in Santa Tecla they are celebrating the novena of the Miraculous Medal, and I want to thank the Sisters of Charity for their intention of praying during this novena for the priests and the bishop. On Wednesday in San Marcos, Bibles were given to the group of catechumens. I ask your forgiveness for not being able to accompany you as I had promised. On the same afternoon Bibles were also given to another Scripture study group in Panchimalco. In Ilopango there was a beautiful youth gathering at which they concluded that the world cannot be renewed until every young person decides to renew him or herself interiorly. That is what we have always said: the renewal of the world is not a change of structures but a sincere change of human beings. There in Ilopango we also lamented the death of Father Fabian and attended his funeral. At Saint Vincent de Paul Academy there was a beautiful confirmation ceremony of young people. There I also received a moving letter from some elderly folk who told me they were offering all the aches and pains of their old age for this church that labors in El Salvador. In La Palma they are publishing a very nice bulletin called *The Voice of the Spirit*. I want to thank the pastor for the support that he has given to the words of the bishop by encouraging his people to listen to us. I was also visited by members of the construction committee who are restoring the façade of the church in Suchitoto; they are asking the community to help them. I also received a generous offering from the hamlet of Pepeshtenango. May God reward you!

I want to announce to you also, sisters and brothers, that this Thursday, the third Thursday of the month, Thanksgiving Day will be celebrated according to tradition. The 12 o'clock Mass here in the cathedral will have the objective of thanking God for all we have received. I ask those who cannot come to Mass to lift up your hearts to God in your homes, giving thanks for all the good that God has done for us. Finally, I want to let you know that this year as usual we will have the competition of nativity scenes. You can register in the Libería Cultural Católica or the Libería Ercilla. I urge the pastors to promote this competition and to submit the names of their winners so that on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, we can award prizes to the best nativity scenes of San Salvador and its neighborhoods.

As you see, sisters and brothers, we have read the word of God within a very dense framework of historical and ecclesial realities. The first reading takes us back to the earthly origins of Christ the King, the Son of David. At a solemn moment in the history of Israel the people came together in Hebron to anoint David in the name of all the people and to proclaim him as their king and shepherd. This was the beginning of

the dynasty of David from which was born Christ, the true king. When the gospel proclaims, «Jesus, Son of David», it is saying that he is «king of Israel» (Matt 21:9). The second reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians, chapter 1, verses 12 to 20, is an excellent theology of the Apostle Saint Paul about the divine—not earthly like David, but divine—origins of this Son of God who becomes man and who is therefore the true beginning and sustainer of all things. He is the end toward which the whole cosmos converges and from which flows all the force of the universe and naturally the church. Today's gospel presents us with the strange throne of this king, the cross; in the midst of ridicule the king dies. Even though his powerful persecutors were unable to recognize him, a repentant criminal recognizes who he really is: «Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom» (Luke 23:42). And Christ responds, «This very day, even though you see me in pain here on the cross, yet I am the king who is conquering the world through the suffering of the cross. This very day you will be with me in paradise» (Luke 23:42-43).

### **Christ the Prophet**

My sisters and brothers, if in the light of these readings we run through the beautiful perspective of the liturgical year, we discover the characteristics of this kingdom and this king. The liturgical year begins next Sunday with the First Sunday of Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas. The Christmas season continues until the Epiphany. Christmas and Epiphany are seasons of the year when the liturgy proclaims to us that this child born in Bethlehem comes to plant the seed of a kingdom that is already beginning on this earth. He is the truth who has become human, and so we see that one characteristic of the kingdom of Christ is the Word who became flesh (John 1:14). Christ is the Word, the truth, the 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» (Mark 16:15).

What I am preaching now in the Cathedral of San Salvador and through the microphones of La Voz Panamericana<sup>4</sup> is reaching the different communities that are reflecting together with us. This is the prophetic voice of the reign of Christ. It is Christ the King who is speaking as a prophet and proclaiming the truths of God's kingdom and the beauties of God's truth. He is denouncing the darkness of sin so that people may be purified in history and become worthy of this kingdom of truth. Jesus does not want people who are liars. When he stood before Pilate, the governor asked him, «Are you the king of the Jews?» Jesus responded affirmatively, declaring straight away 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» (John 18:33, 37). The mighty Pilate was skeptical because he did not believe in truth, just as many people today do not believe in truth, and so he asked the dismissive question: «What is truth?» (John 18:38). That is how many people live, sisters and brothers, turning their back on the truth and even despising the truth. Therefore, as we conclude this liturgical year today, I am happy that you people have understood that the kingdom that Christ preaches is a kingdom of truth. Studies have analyzed in depth the situation and the actions of the archbishop and his priests, and they have affirmed that the church has maintained the truth and has been faithful to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of truth, the kingdom of the prophet.

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

After the Epiphany begin the days we call Ordinary Time. There are thirty-four Sundays that begin between the Epiphany and Lent and then are interrupted to allow for Lent and the Easter season. They continue after Easter until this Sunday, the Thirty-fourth Sunday and also the feast of Christ the King. As we have journeyed and reflected together here in the cathedral, you have become aware that the long season of Ordinary Time presents us steadily with the teachings of Christ: his doctrine, his way of thinking, what he expects of people. The Gospel that was chosen for this year, from Saint Luke, is marvelous because it presents us with the teaching of Christ as he journeys toward Jerusalem. If we remember all the different gospel passages we have been reading this year, all have been episodes in which Saint Luke's Gospel describes a journey toward Jerusalem. Now we have arrived, and the highpoint of Jerusalem is Calvary. But Jesus' goal during the journey has been a long lesson in which as teacher and prophet he has been instructing people about the Beatitudes, pardon, love, understanding. That Gospel is the only lighted path, sisters and brothers, and it helps us to find the solution to everything.

### **Christ the Priest**

The interruption in the liturgical year during Lent and Holy Week and Easter shows us another characteristic of this kingdom of Christ: it is a priestly kingdom. Christ is the Son of God who becomes incarnate; he becomes man in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary. The union of the divine nature with the human nature provided by a woman results in that combination called Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man. As man anointed by the Holy Spirit, the personality of God, he is eternal priest.

Mary conceives in her womb a God who in becoming man becomes also a priest and mediator of human causes. That is why Mary is also the mother of the church. On this feast of Christ the King, our eyes turn with filial devotion toward the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, mother of the king, mother of the prophet, mother of the eternal priest. As priest, Christ goes up silently to Jerusalem. He has already spoken; he has already taught us by his words. Now the example he gives is absolute priestly surrender in silence. On the cross Christ dies. Christ dies as a priest, giving his life for the glory of God and the salvation of all people.

We cannot conceive the kingdom of God without the help of this great messianic concept of salvation. When the prophets of the Old Testament were announcing the coming of Christ, they fused two perspectives: the messianic, temporal perspective of Christ and the eschatological, eternal perspective which brings the kingdom of Christ to fulfillment. 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 incarnate Christ who is born and lives among human beings is God giving history and the universe their true orientation and their divine meaning.

Christ, priest and Redeemer. The first phase is the one we are living in now: from his first coming, twenty centuries ago, until the end of world—when it will be, we do not know. When it will be does not matter. What matters is that we now find ourselves in that phase when the promises of the Old Testament have become reality in the king who was born of the Virgin Mary. That king now lives forever because he died on the cross

and rose. He rose and is filled with life, and he offers his life to the people who follow him. This kingdom of truth and life is a priestly kingdom. All we who are sinners find forgiveness in Christ because his blood shed on the cross is the sacrifice that obtained forgiveness for all crimes. Therefore, when from this pulpit we denounce the sins that stain our history, we call sinners to conversion. We never call the victims to vengeance for that is not Christian. Rather, we say to the one who committed the crime, «Be converted, for Jesus dies also for you. He is waiting for you so that he can forgive you».

Who would grant me, sisters and brothers, that this word of the eternal priest, Christ the King, would enter into those shadowy places which hide the criminal hands of the many persons responsible for the mysterious disappearance and death of so many people? May the grace of Christ touch you: be converted, and let us return to the kingdom of love where these bloody events have no place! In this first phase Christ the priest is giving us time—until the hour of our death, until the hour when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

### **Christ the King**

When history comes to an end, the priestly, messianic, temporal mission of Christ will also come to an end. That is when the final judgment will begin, the tremendous event described in the Gospel of Saint Matthew. Those who obeyed will be placed on the right and told, «Come, blessed of my Father, to inherit the kingdom, a kingdom that I conquered on earth and now turn over to the Father so that he can be all in all» (Matt 25:34).

My sisters and brothers, I predict all of you on that day will be found on the right hand of the Judge and be called «blessed of the Father» because of the priestly forgiveness of Christ. On the other side will be the reprobates, those who have not taken advantage of God's mercy, those who instead of listening to the merciful voice of the church have slandered and defamed her, those who have built walls against the kingdom of God, those who sin against the Holy Spirit, those who have hindered the kingdom of Christ on earth. If they are not converted in time, then the sentence will be passed and they will be judged. Christ will say to them, «Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the rebellious devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food. I was thirsty and you gave 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 the murdered, and you showed me no mercy». Surprised, the reprobates will ask him, «When, Lord?» And he will say, «When you hurt one of these least sisters and brothers, you hurt me» (Matt 25:41-45).

If only we realized, sisters and brothers, how Christ becomes incarnate in every person during this messianic time—how we would respect one another, how we would love one another! Exploitation of one another would disappear! In the presence of Christ there are no social classes. Christ is fully present in everyone, even the most destitute, even the most wealthy. Christ is in all of us. Justice does not call for hating the rich or despising the poor because Christ wishes to establish his law of love on this earth. This is the temporal kingdom of Christ. When he tells Pilate, «My kingdom does not belong to this world» (John 18:36), and when he flees from the crowds who want to make him king (John 6:15), it is not because he has no power over the things of earth

but rather because he wants *us* to administer these things according to his ideals. Legislators, government officials, and judges are not the owners of the nation; they do not own justice or the laws. They are administrators of the reign of Christ, and they must administer justice, the government, and the common good according to the ideals of the just king, the king of love and solidarity. If an official does not fulfill this supreme law of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, he will be a useless scourge because after punishing a people he will be cast into the eternal fires.

My sisters and brothers, this is history in the light of Christ the King. When the final consummation—the eschatological kingdom—arrives, as I explained last Sunday, then those who walk with Christ will make that luminous pilgrimage toward the kingdom of heaven to possess happiness forever while the condemned will go to eternal punishment. The church will rejoice in having initiated God’s kingdom on earth, and she will be gathered up by the Divine Shepherd among the number of those who are saved.

I am not saying that only those who belong to the church will be saved. In the Mass there is the beautiful prayer: «Oh God, you extended your merciful hand so that everyone who looks for you might find you».<sup>5</sup> Once I explained to you that there are non-Christian religions whose members have not known Christ, but they live according to an irreproachable morality, better than that of many Christians. They will be saved while many Christians will not, for it is not enough just to be in the body of the church which is the kingdom of Christ—many sinful people are just in the body—it is necessary to be in the heart of the church (LG 16). Those who are outside the geographical, visible limits of the hierarchical church but fulfill the law of God by the light of Christ that reaches them mysteriously—these individuals are more in the heart of this church of Christ than many who live in the church but are not faithful to the church.

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

Therefore, sisters and brothers, in the light of Christ the King let us see how these three titles of Jesus—Prophet, Priest, and King—are characteristics that baptism gives to all baptized persons so that they may collaborate with Christ. As priests, all Christians have to collaborate so that the world may be consecrated to God. Parents, young people, children, all those baptized should feel themselves to be a priestly people, and by the kingship of Christ our Lord they should bring light into their homes, their businesses, their farms, their estates, their work, their shops, and all their activities.

How beautiful will be the day when all the baptized understand that their profession or their job is priestly work. Just as I am going to celebrate Mass at this altar, so each carpenter celebrates Mass at his workbench, and each metalworker, each professional, each doctor with his scalpel, the market woman at her stand—they are performing a priestly office! How many cabdrivers—I know they listen to this message in their taxis!—you, dear motorists, are priests at the wheel 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 car. And so, sisters and brothers, how much good we would do if, instead of defaming and discrediting and hating, we worked together with Christ as one priestly people to orient this created nature toward God!

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

Christ has also made us prophets who participate in his mission of communicating his word and his message. The father of a family is priest and prophet in his home. He has to correct and guide. Likewise the professional and the employer. Likewise everyone, sisters and brothers! There is no one here in the cathedral, no one listening to me on the radio, who does not have a prophetic mission, the prophetic mission of announcing the kingdom of Christ and denouncing sins against this kingdom and bringing the whole world to Christ.

Finally, there is the function of Christ the King. His royalty means a social kingdom, a kingdom of Christian justice, love, and peace. We all have to work together so that the rights of the children of God are respected in the goods created by God—the harvests now being reaped; the laws; the social, political, and economic structures. May the kingdom of God be truly a reality that opens the way for the preaching of the Gospel.

Thank you, my sisters and brothers, for listening to me and for reflecting with me. I invite you to celebrate this Mass as a people intimately united with that presence that is still invisible. In the host and in the chalice Christ is not seen but is present, and that is enough for a Christian. Christ is here in the midst of Christian society, in the midst of the base communities. Wherever people are now gathered together to reflect, there is Christ. Here in the cathedral Christ is *you*, sisters and brothers! This Christ lives! Let us place our hope in him! Let us not despair! It is true, as I told you, that we have been through a week that seems to portend a new phase of terror and fear and violence, but may God prevent it. As Christians, do not be ruled by fear. In your hearts have the certainty that Christ lives! He lives and offers us the solutions to all our problems! He asks us only that we not be deaf, much less persecutors of his message. Rather, let us hear his message and above all try to live it. Let us not put the blame for evil on others. Let us look at ourselves to see whether we have really lived as true followers of Christ the Prophet, Christ the Priest, and Christ the King!