



THE KINGSHIP OF THE HOLY INFANT

Christmas, the feast of the Incarnation is approaching, and we are preparing for it through the Advent season and the space for quiet reflection and prayer it should give us. We contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation, which is the mysterious fact that the infinite, powerful, and unfathomable Almighty God wanted to become a Child to make our humanity the instrument of redemption for the whole universe.

A child, indeed, He became, in the full sense of the word, from the first moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary at the words of the Annunciation. The Church sings in the Te Deum: *non horruisti Virginis uterum*. “He did not despise the Virgin’s womb,” because He made Himself so small even so as to grow like every other child under the heart of His Blessed Mother. Frail and minute, He never ceased to be the only begotten Son of the Almighty Father. He never stopped to be united through His Divinity with the eternal being of the Holy Trinity. From the first moment of His earthly existence, His humanity, even though that of an infant child, would always be full of Divine Power, Strength, and Glory.

No one can ever doubt about the sovereignty of the Supreme God in His threefold Unity over everything that exists. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity participates fully in this eternal domination of the Godhead over all created being. Now, in the moment of the Incarnation, through the merciful Will of the same Divinity, human nature in the Christ Child is for the first time enabled to be a part of this sovereignty. Because of the inseparable unity between His divine and His human nature founded in His Divine Person, the Infant in the womb of His Immaculate Mother is King as God and King as Man.

At the moment of His birth, this Kingship of the newborn redeemer is revealed to all. As meek and tender as the baby in the cradle may appear, the angels already sing His Glory, the shepherds come to adore Him, and from afar arrive princes mighty of power and wisdom to humble themselves before the King of the Universe. It is with a profound reason that Christian art has frequently shown the Mother of God kneeling in front of the crèche in pious devotion.

Forever, from this first Christmas on, we have a King that reigns over us and by beginning His earthly reign as a poor Child and by ending it as the Crucified Redeemer, He shows us how He wants to reign. His greatest power is manifest to us in the moments of His apparent weakness, and He truly teaches us to overcome the forces of this world with a charity without fear and a burning love ready to die for us. He is so powerful and so strong that He does not have to fear to be meek, humble, and obedient. It is His Childhood that shows us the true marks of His Kingship: love, mercy, and meekness. When, at the end of this our world, fire will consume heaven and earth, and Christ will finally reveal His sovereign Glory as Supreme Judge and Eternal King to all eyes, He will nevertheless not cease to have the same love, mercy, and meekness that He has shown as the Holy Infant.

Christ the King reigns with Almighty dominance, and as He Himself states, He has come to bring the sword and the fire of His burning love to this earth to make it impossible for us to hide from His truth and His grace. However, at the same time, He remains the approachable Child, the sacrificed Lamb, the tender Shepherd, whose Reign begins and ends with a supreme act of charity.

During the night of Christmas, when the statue of the Holy Infant will be borne into our churches, and after Mass we humbly kneel before the crèche in the way of the poor shepherds, we witness again the depth of the love that wants to embrace us all with the open arms of the baby King, who is so strong and so powerful that no sin and no crime can resist His forgiveness. No one who has a heart can see a child suffer. God in Christ the Child has taken on a heart for us, the most tender and most loving heart of all. This Advent season and the Christmas celebrations to come should strengthen our belief in His love and fortify our proposal to repent and never to hurt the heart of the Divine Child again.

Msgr. R. Michael Schmitz