

Feast of Christ the King (C)
St. Francis Parish
November 20, 2016

(also Baptism at St. Francis)

No one of us likes being identified or described with one word, or even a single sentence. We probably all think, and rightly so, that there is more to us than a single word or sentence can express. So certainly we can't expect to describe or express the person of Jesus with one simple phrase or just a few words. Of all the persons who have lived on this earth, Jesus is hard to describe with any words, no matter how many. Yet that is really all that we have: we just have words.

Today's three Scriptures give us some of the more important phrases used to describe Jesus and his purpose and role in our lives. The ones we heard are:

1. Shepherd and Commander

- care and protection, tenderness not the exercise of power,
- we dare to recognize his voice and follow wherever he goes

2. King of Israel

- universal rule, extending far beyond just those of one's origin and kind

3. Image of the invisible God

- Christ is from God, and Christ reigns over everything that IS OF and BELONGS TO God. If we are to know God and see God, we must do it through Jesus.

4. Firstborn of all creation

- Jesus has primacy of power. Christ attentively oversees and cares for the garden of the world over which He rules

5. Source of all created things

- Christ is the model after which all things are fashioned.

6. Head of the body, the Church

- Jesus is not distant or disinterested in us. Just as a body needs a head, and a head needs a body, Jesus needs us and we need Him.

7. Firstborn of the dead

- Jesus our shepherd and leader, has gone ahead in His resurrection. He has paved the way, and we will follow. The path is clear; we will be raised through
and
with and in Him.

8. Crucified King

-all of the primacy and power of Jesus is placed into the mix of our own humanity. His willingness to suffer and die for us is such a strong image of his wanting to be for us. One only gives one's life for someone we love.

Because of who Jesus is, as He is described in these many titles, Jesus could rightfully say to the repentant criminal next to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Obviously, you and I do not have the authority to make that same promise. When we connect to Jesus this promise is ours as well.

Today's Sacrament of Baptism is one of the 7 Sacramental ways that we connect with Jesus. Many times in the Scriptures we hear Jesus teaching that He gives to us everything that He has received from His Father. This happens very clearly in the Sacrament of Baptism.

As Firstborn of all creation, Jesus oversees and cares for everything in the garden of this world. Infusing us with the life and grace of his Father in a most excellent way of caring for us.

As Head of the body, the Church, Jesus fills each member, each person, of His Body with the same life that He has received from His Father.

As Firstborn of the dead, Jesus brings us into the cycle of resurrected life that He now has. In our baptism, in the baptism of this child, we are brought into the path of life that is meant to end in resurrected and eternal life with God.

In many of the beautiful prayers that are part of the Baptismal rite, we hear references to Jesus' own death and resurrection. If we die with Christ, we will also live with Him. In baptism today, Elizabeth Marie will be claimed by Jesus as part of His own mystery of going through death into life. This child will die in the waters of this font only to be immediately raised up into the grace of God's life. And the promise made by Jesus to the one on the cross near him is made also to Elizabeth Marie "Today's you will be with me in paradise."

Today, Christ the King, becomes the light and guiding influence of this child. May Christ the King be the same light and guiding influence of our lives, especially Elizabeth's parents.