

## Christ the King 2017

Do you remember the Gospel a few Sundays ago when the authorities asked Jesus whether it was lawful to pay the tax to Caesar? Jesus responded by asking for a coin and posing the question, Whose image is on the coin? Caesar's they replied and Jesus says. Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar but to God what belongs to God. In other words, this small metal coin may belong to Caesar because his image is imprinted on it. But God's image is imprinted on the whole universe.

The week before that Gospel there was a report in the Times of a mind-bending event in the universe. Here's what was said "Astronomers announced on Monday that they had seen and heard a pair of dead stars collide, giving them their first glimpse of the violent process by which most of the gold and silver in the universe was created. The collision known as a kilonova, rattled the galaxy in which it happened 130 million light years from here and sent fireworks across the universe. Such explosions, astronomers have long suspected, produced many of the heavier elements like gold, silver and uranium. All the atoms in your wedding band, in the pharaoh's treasures and the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and still threaten us have been formed in cosmic gong show that reverberated across the heavens."

There was something about the metal coin in Jesus's hand coming from an explosion of stars in the universe that was so STARTLING that I had to play some heavy metal music. It happened to be Buying My way into Heaven. (Play)

This is the universe which God claims for Jesus as Sovereign. Yes, I know the technical term is King of the Universe. But King is so medieval, so masculine, so limiting. At least Sovereign captures the essence of what we are claiming: that God has invested supreme authority in Jesus Christ. It's what we hear in the reading from Corinthians:

when he has destroyed every sovereignty  
and every authority and power.

he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.  
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.  
When everything is subjected to him,  
then the Son himself will also be subjected  
to the one who subjected everything to him,  
so that God may be all in all.

Jesus Christ, Sovereign of the Universe! (and speaking of coins, there used to be a British gold piece called a Sovereign)

So what is so stunning about our faith is that although we claim the ultimate universal authority, sovereignty, power for Jesus Christ, at the same time we hear him say that he is solidarity with the hungry, the thirsty, the imprisoned, the sick, the stranger. What the Gospel today proclaims is that when we care for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, imprisoned, the stranger, we are doing this not just “for” him but “to” Christ himself. Christ identifies himself with the immigrant, the incarcerated, the chronically ill, the victims of terror, the homeless at our Welcome Table. On this last Sunday of the liturgical year, we are reminded that the one who is Sovereign of the Universe is also the Good shepherd who shares his mission to care for all of creation, especially the most vulnerable with us.

Yes, there are explosions in the universe that startle and surprise us.  
Yes, there is an explosion of love in the Heart of God and this is whom we know as Jesus Christ, Sovereign of the Universe.