

Feast of Christ, the King

Have you heard about Hamilton? It is hottest box office musical on Broadway: score written by Lin-Manuel Miranda whose parents emigrated from Puerto Rico. He wanted to write a musical about Alexander Hamilton. He needed to research about him.

Alexander Hamilton:

- **Born in the West Indies in 1755. Illegitimate son.**
- **Immigrated to New York as an orphan young boy in his teens .**
- **Eventually adopted by the man believed to be his father.**
- **Worked for General George Washington in the Continental Army as his aid. Instrumental in setting up the founding documents of the United States and became the first to Head the Department of the Treasury.**

But this playwright, Miranda's, had an artistic challenge. All the main persons around Hamilton were all stuffy upper American who, with the exception of Hamilton, are all men, all white men. How do you present this story in a musical form to the present day diverse cultural population of America New York 300 years after it all happened? How do I make the life of Hamilton speak to today's audience?

- He introduced an intriguing mix of modified Rapp music and dance.
- The cast for the play included a balance of Black, Puerto Rican and white ... of men and women

The play captures the interest and imagination of today's audience and speaks to their hearts.

(PAUSE)

As we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King today, we in the Church have the same problem as Miranda had with the play, Hamilton.

For the Feast of Christ, the King was comes rather late in our history as a faith community. It was stablished in 1925 in the Catholic Church.

The feast appeared at a very unique time in the history of the Church.

The Medieval Kingdoms in Europe were disappearing. Kings and queens were becoming a thing of the past.

The leadership of the Church in Europe feared of loss of influence of the Church on people's lives because of the continual loss of its own dwindling kingdom called the Papal States. The land had been inherited by the Church since the Middle Ages and the Church saw herself as the protector of its people.

Eventually the Church did sign a concordat with the government of Italy giving over all the land it owned except for the very small piece of property called Vatican City.

That is why in 1925 the Church began to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King in order to focus on the meaning of the Kingdom of God which Jesus speaks about and gives witness to in the Bible.

What then do we do with this Feast of Christ the King today?

How does the Church establish a people and support them on their way to glory?

We know that Jesus' kingdom is very different than world governments. Maybe by taking a look at how secular governments work, we can see how different the kingdom of God is.

- **Most world governments are established to protection of their people. Many do that through violence and force: ISIS - El Kaida - even the great Roman Empire had a great army.**
 - **There is even a strong tone of force in our own government of the United States. We have the strongest industrial-military complex in the world.**

- But our government is not based solely on force; it also rests on a respect for Law: (example: traffic lights)
- But even more basic than force and law, is based on values: (have people recite the pledge of allegiance). Liberty and justice as the main values of America.

Yes, America, a Kingdom, a government, based on enforced laws based on values. How is that different from the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaims?

In today's gospel Pilate asks Jesus if he was a king. And he answers that he that he has come to witness to the truth. He says quite clearly that violence and force is not way of establishing a Kingdom. And while law is important (10 commandments and love of God and neighbor is critical), only if we believe in the values expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can lead to the establishing of the Kingdom of God. "I am the way, the truth and the life."

And so we might ask ourselves, "What would the Kingdom of God look like? What values would he build his kingdom on?"

The Preface of today's mass sums it up fairly well:

It says that Jesus did indeed come to establish a kingdom:

A kingdom of truth and life

A kingdom of holiness and grace

A kingdom of justice, love and peace

But these values must become a part of our daily life if we are to establish the Kingdom of God. For instance if we speak of a:

Kingdom of peace

- **Non-violence (Peter cutting off the ear of the high priest)**

Kingdom of life

- **Protection of life, especially of the most vulnerable, unborn, elders**

Kingdom of Justice:

- **treating all men and women with equal care within the Church and society**

Kingdom of grace:

- **extending forgiveness, mercy to even to our enemies. (Year of mercy)**

Kingdom of holiness:

- **Hospitality of God who welcomes all: immigration, those feeling alienated in our midst**

Kingdom of love: As St. Paul says we need to put on the heart and mind of Christ.

As we celebrate the Feast of Christ, our King, let us live out the values of the Kingdom of God which, at times, can be quite different from the values of present day society where power, might and the striving for money reigns.

Father, may your kingdom come,

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

NOW and forever. AMEN