

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 18: 33-37. (R1) Dan. 7: 13-14. (R2) Rev. 5: 8

The last Sunday of the Church Year appropriately is dedicated to Christ as King.

The political institution of kingship was confined to a particular period of Jewish history (1050 to 597 B.C.). It was not accepted without some misgivings. The early prophets sensed danger in monarchy.

After the Exile (536 B.C.), the Jews returned to the pre-royal period when Israel was a priestly theocracy. Still the idea of kingship so gripped the imagination that Jews thought of messianic times in the terms of the restoration of kingship.

When David was king, Nathan had promised a Messiah from his line (2 Sm. 7:16). Thus a royal dimension tinged Israel's messianic hope. When David's successors proved unfaithful to the Covenant, Israel began to look forward to a perfect king who would establish a kingdom in which they would enjoy privileged position. Thus a political dominance also colored royal messianism.

What was true of Israel was also true of the New Israel, the Church. In medieval times, Church-State relationship, due to a misunderstanding of Christ's kingship, took on a political hue. In modern times, misconceiving Christ's kingship as something purely spiritual, Church-State relationship has taken on a secular hue: absolute separation of Church and State.

The feast of Christ the King was instituted in 1925 to correct such aberrations. The readings indicate the true nature of Christ's kingship.

First, He is King, because He is the faithful witness. His life and death unveiled God's plan of salvation for man. "The reason why I came into the world is to testify to the truth." His subjects are those who believe in Him.

He is King, because He is the firstborn from the dead. By His resurrection, He is the first man to conquer death, and He is the only way His subjects can conquer it.

He is King, because He is ruler of kings of the earth. "When he reached the Ancient One (God the Father) . . . He received dominion, glory, and kingship." (R1)

But the nature of His kingship is two fold. First, His kingdom is not of this world. It is constituted in this world, but it bears no resemblance to earthly kingdoms. "My kingdom does not belong to this world," Jesus told Pilate.

Secondly, His kingdom is a universal one, that is, Christ died to save all men.

That is the problem today with modern man. Modern man is especially aware of his own capabilities and of his mastery over the universe — the bionic man, and now the bionic women. The problem today is to convince modern man that without Christ he can do nothing. That's a problem!

How can Christians do this? A possible answer is by Christian witness. Is Christ our King? Does He rule our lives? Are our thoughts, words, acts shaped, moulded by His truths? Do our deeds follow our creed? Gandhi lamented, "Oh, you Christians, if you were only more like your Christ, the whole world would be Christian!"

Christ is King, because He is present and active in the world today. Through His word, each Sunday, and the eucharistic bread, He influences men and change them. Today's liturgy emphasizes the extent of His activity. He is present in the world changing us and through us other people.

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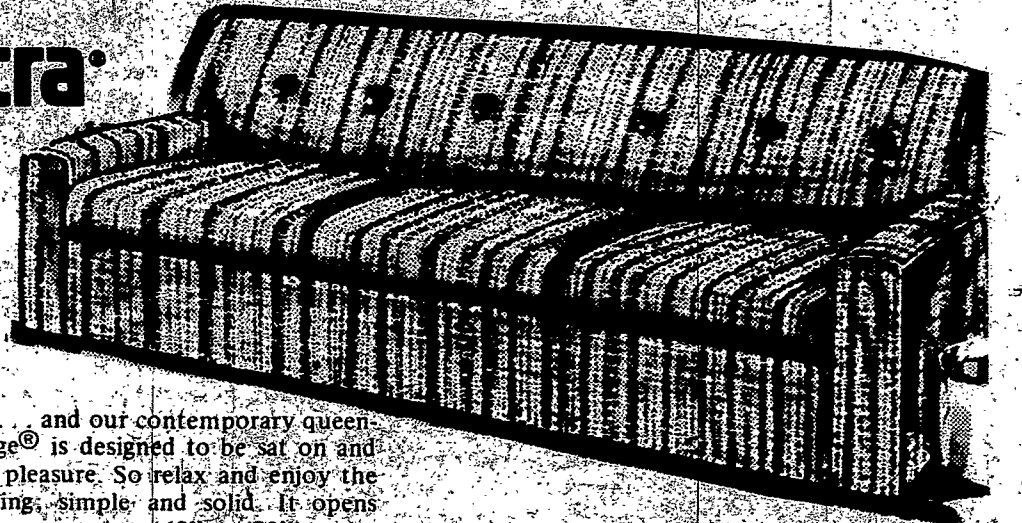


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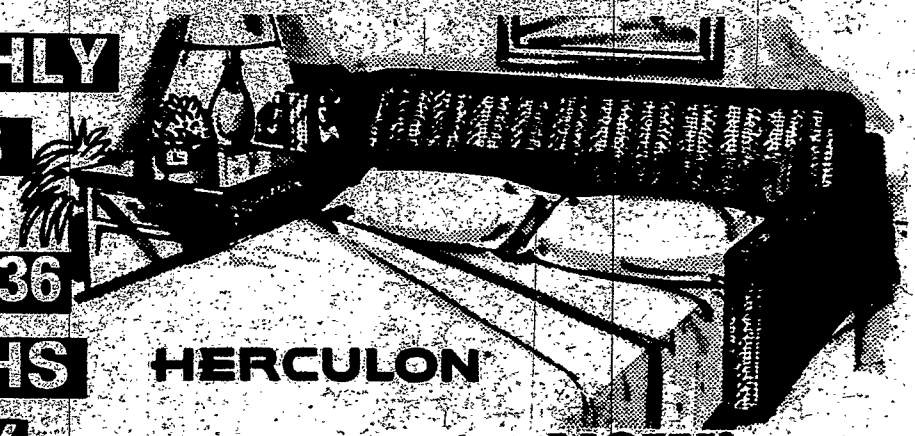
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