



St. Matthew's Cathedral eNews

Christ + Compassion + Community

From the Dean

The Feast of Christ the King—Really?

You will find the name on this day in few, if any, liturgical calendars. The name is not listed in our prayer book, but in liturgical circles the name for today's date is The Feast of Christ the King.

There is a move in certain parts of the Church not to use the term "king" because it is patriarchal and power-based. The idea is that we have moved past these outmoded ways of thinking.

Yet, it is the power of those ancient stories and symbols that speak to our deepest yearnings. Little girls want to be princesses (why did over 42 million people tune in to watch the wedding of Prince William and Princess Kate?), and little boys want to battle the dragon or the bad guy.

As a teenager in the '60s I was rather hippy-ish in my values. (I'm not quite sure how else to say that in a few words.) We tried to raise our sons to be peace loving. We did not want them growing up with violence in their life. They spent their early years without a TV in the house. We did not buy guns for our sons. We didn't have to: they made guns out of sticks anyway.

What I'm saying is that some of these values are more deeply ingrained in our psyche than—at least—I wanted to acknowledge.

Christ the King means that there is a king, and not just any king, but the King, against which all rulers and presidents and prime ministers and chairmen and chairwomen are measured against. And they all come up short.

N.T. Wright in his book *How God Became King* says that rather than the Church being triumphalist, we are called to be servants and to be involved in a holistic mission in and with our world. "The church belongs at the very heart of the world, to be the place of prayer and holiness at the point where the world is in pain — not to be a somewhat 'religious' version of the world, on the one hand, or a detached, heavenly minded enclave on the other."

So, I encourage you not to flinch at the mention of Christ the King; rather, I encourage you to join in his sufferings, to be broken bread and poured out wine to a hungry and thirsty world. I encourage you to be not so concerned about whether "Christ the King" is patriarchal and more concerned about what it means for you and me to be a servant of the King.