

## **OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE (C)**

### **“MEANING OF SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE”**

The Solemnity of Christ the King provides us with an opportunity to contemplate Christ in his glorified state as King of all Creation and of our souls. All persons from every nation and era owe their allegiance to Christ the King on two levels: as creatures, we must all honor Christ as our loving Creator; as sinners, we must praise Christ the King as our merciful Redeemer.

Moreover, this Feast reminds us that Christ is King, not only of individual souls, but of whole societies and nations.

This feast was instituted by Pius XI in 1925 when Europe was still recovering from the bloodshed and destruction of the First World War (1914-18). Pius XI blamed the lack of peace within and between nations on one thing – the rejection of the Social Kingship of Jesus Christ. Pius XI declared that:

‘As long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of Our Savior, there will be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations.’ (*Quas primas*, n. 1)

The great majority of problems faced by traditionally Christian societies can be attributed to the fact that Christ has been dethroned as King. Let’s have a brief look at our own nation.

When you have an honest look at the history of the United States of America, you have to accept that it was founded by Christians for the purpose of spreading the Gospel.

In 1911, New Jersey governor Woodrow Wilson stated that “America was born a Christian nation ... born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of the Holy Scripture.”<sup>i</sup>

While the United States was built on Christian principles, the founders made it clear that no one particular religion would be recognized as the state religion at the exclusion of others. In fact, the *First Amendment* of the U.S. Constitution declares that:

‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.’

‘The first part of the First Amendment prohibits the federal government from establishing a state church, such as existed in England and in some of the states in 1791, and from discriminating for or against particular faiths. The founders were determined to ensure that the new national government had no jurisdiction over matters of religion, in large part to insure that each American would be free to pursue the religion of [his or her] choice without state interference. Far from reflecting hostility toward religion, our founders, rooted in their own faith

convictions, knew that faith was not just an essential element, but the essence of civilization and the inspiration of culture.’

‘The second reference to religion in the First Amendment guaranteed the free exercise of religion and in conjunction with the prohibition of established churches, these two concepts were to work together to ensure that religion and people of faith had powerful constitutional protections of their right to not only worship as their conscience dictated, but to be free to bring their religiously informed moral convictions into the public discourse.’<sup>ii</sup>

The First Amendment to the United States’ Constitution was intended to protect American citizens from being coerced by government agencies in relation to their religious worship and expression. And, yet, how is it that today we are finding ever increasing threats to religious freedom in our country?

The answer lies in the fact that over 50 years ago, ‘the Supreme Court was captured by judicial ideologues who understood its latent power to reshape society. Using the incorporation clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Court asserted a right to impose on the states all the restrictions the constitution had imposed on Congress. ... Where the First Amendment prohibited Congress from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion”, and required Congress to respect the “free exercise” of faith, the

Supreme Court reinterpreted the words to justify a preemptive strike on Christianity.’<sup>iii</sup>

As a result, all ‘Christian Bibles, books, crosses, symbols, ceremonies, and holidays were ordered out of the public square and public schools. Out went Adam and Eve; in came *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Out went paintings of Christ ascending into heaven; in came pictures of apes ascending into *Homo erectus*. Out went Easter; in came Earth Day.’<sup>iv</sup> Out went the Bible and the Ten Commandments; in came a new form of morality.

‘Going back fifty years, the Supreme Court has inflicted an almost uninterrupted string of defeats upon the faith of our fathers. In 1948, voluntary religious instruction was outlawed in public schools. In 1962, school prayer went. In 1963, voluntary daily reading from the Bible was declared unconstitutional. In 1980, a Kentucky law that called for posting the Ten Commandments on classroom walls was overturned because the Commandments serve “no secular purpose.” In 1985, Alabama’s “moment of silence” at the start of the school day was declared unconstitutional. ... In 1992, all prayers at high school graduations were prohibited. In 2000, students were forbidden to pray over the loudspeakers at high school games.’ And the list goes on!

A nation built on Christian principles has been hijacked by secular humanist ideologies. ‘Christians have been dispossessed by a militant minority whose beliefs are alien to Middle America, but which managed to have its allies capture the Supreme Court and impose its agenda by diktat.’

The dethronement of Christ from American public life was not done democratically, but dictatorially. Christ has been dethroned as King through the enactment of unjust laws. What Christians have lost in this country, they will not get back without a struggle.

There is a cultural war going on, with many casualties to our Christian heritage. Attacks from cultural revolutionaries will continue and there will be no truce from their side. Traditionalists can run, but they can’t hide. With our public schools and public square already de-Christianized, our private schools and private institutions are to be the next victims. Through the hook of public money, all will ... be forced to conform to the catechism of a revolution that declares infallibly, “All lifestyles are equal.” Whoever says otherwise – let him be anathema.’<sup>v</sup>

Most people today understand that there is a separation of Church and State in the United States. And this is true. However, how are we to understand this? Are we to agree with John F. Kennedy, who said ‘I believe in an America where the separation of church

and state is absolute’? In other words, should we see that the state and the Christian churches should always be at odds with one another? Or is there another way of understanding this?

‘The words “separation of church and state” do not appear in the First Amendment. In a much-quoted letter, Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment as “building a wall of separation between church and state.” But the First Amendment did not create a wall between church and state. It [simply] prohibited Congress from making “a law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”’<sup>vi</sup> Jefferson’s “wall of separation” describes the First Amendment’s role in preventing government from interfering with religious expression. This being said, the First Amendment did not prohibit government from acknowledging God or supporting religion generally.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King, may we ever more submit ourselves to the reign of our King! May our country be guided by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit! May those who are in leadership know that whatever power they have is to be used for the good of the Kingdom of God!

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<sup>i</sup> Ibid, p. 182

<sup>ii</sup> Senator Rick Santorum, as found at <http://www.catholic.org/news/politics/story.php?id=38231>

<sup>iii</sup> Buchanan, *THE DEATH OF THE WEST*, p. 183

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid

<sup>v</sup> Ibid

<sup>vi</sup> Michael J. Gaynor, as found at <http://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=1115>