Before I started to become ***aware of*** or ***even desired***, for that matter, a personal relationship with Jesus, today's celebration of Christ the King was always something I looked forward to. Like other high points in the Church year such as Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, there's something extra ***special*** about this day. I've come to recognise this ***sense*** of ***special-ness*** as Jesus Himself, risen and present, reaching out and gently saying, "Here I am; I am truth, I am peace, I am love, and I desire to be known and loved by you."

The Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, is a paradoxical celebration because while we live under the rule of a monarchy, King Charles is a distant figure whom most of us will never get ***the chance*** to meet. In feudal times, peasants pledged their allegiance (and taxes) to a king in return for protection and safety. But the king was not a close, intimate companion in any way. This may be some people's childhood image of God: a distant figure whom we believe is real, but who ***remains*** distant and unknowable

And yet, what's fascinating is that this idea of a *distant, unapproachable king* is ***exactly*** the image the Church wanted to ***dismantle*** when it created this feast. Today, we celebrate **100 years since Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in 1925**. The Church wasn't trying to ***reinforce*** an image of Jesus as a remote ruler, but quite the opposite.

The world at that time was reeling in the vacuum ***that*** World War 1 ***created***: nations were traumatised with millions dead, economies were shattered, and elements of social life that gave people a sense of security and certainty were collapsing. In that time of confusion and change, powerful movements such as communism,

fascism, and extreme nationalism emerged – sound familiar? These movements demanded that people give them complete loyalty and often tried to push God and faith out of public life. Governments were increasingly pushing God to the margins, insisting that the state alone deserved people's allegiance.

It was into ***this time*** of confusion, fear, and shifting loyalties that the Church proclaimed:

"There is only one true King—and His kingdom is not built on fear, violence, or coercion, but on truth, peace, and love."

And this is precisely what St Paul proclaims God has done in today's second ready:

"He has taken us out of the power of darkness and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in him, we gain our freedom."

In other words, Jesus' kingship is not oppressive but liberating. He does not rule by domination but by mercy. He does not impose from ***above*** but draws us ***into*** a kingdom of healing and belonging. And far from being some distant monarch, **He is the "image of the unseen God"**—who comes ***close***, who takes **flesh**, and who actively accompanies ***us***.

The feast of Christ the King is a bold declaration that no earthly power—certainly no political party, no ideology, no state—has ultimate authority over the human heart. Only Jesus does.

And that brings us back to the heart of today. Jesus' kingship is not ***just*** some ***idea*** or ***church teaching*** in which we ***faithfully believe***. It's a kingship of intimate presence that ***heals*** and offers a ***peace***

that the world cannot give. It's the rule of a shepherd who knows the sound of our voice, and who desires a relationship with us.

So as we celebrate **100 years of this feast of Christ the King**, the invitation is simple and beautiful: to let Jesus be King not "out ***there***," but "in ***here***"—in our hearts, in our desires, in our worries, and in our hopes. To let Him rule not by force, but by friendship. Not by fear, but by freedom. And certainly not by distance, but by a love which ***seeks*** to draw us close.

May this celebration open a new space in our hearts to say:

"Jesus, be the King of my life." Amen.