

Christ the King (The Grand Inquisitor & The King)

"Pilate therefore said to Him: *Art Thou a king then?* Jesus answered: *Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth.*"

1. *For this was Christ Our Lord born...* For this He came into the world... to be the King of kings. What do kings do? In a word, they provide. They provide a kingdom, a realm, for their devoted subjects. In the realm of the King of kings, for His loyal subjects, He provides only good and wholesome things. Here are few: He provides ways to elevate the minds and hearts of His people by giving them faith-filled writings and traditions found in the Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Tradition, authoritative teachings of the Church and the works of the saints. He provides Mysteries for our mind... as well as wonders and miracles (e.g., Oct 13, 1917, miracles of Lourdes). He lays down laws for right and ordered thinking, acting and living. He provides Divine Authority. He gives His subjects work to do, vocations, places in which to merit His favor. What is more, His Royal Majesty raises up saints for leaders and models of virtue. He gives types down through time to be fulfilled, making "every event in the world ... a type of those that follow, history proceeding forward as a circle ever enlarging..." (*The Antichrist*, Miceli, p. 106). He inspires prophecies to guide and warn, as well as prayers by which to communicate with the King, His Queen and His Royal court. The King provides His people nourishment in the Bread from Heaven, Armor to engage in spiritual battles, castles and bastions of the faith in which to find sure shelter in evil days. Finally, His Majesty sends Angelic guides to enlighten and defend, helping us to remain faithful subjects even to the end. *For this was Christ born...* For this He came into the world... to be the King of kings... providing a Kingdom that is not of this world.
2. The King of kings is perfectly just in all things. Thus, He enjoys rewarding His faithful subjects, and such Rewards always follow a trial... a test. The greater the trial, the greater the reward. If we embrace all the good and wholesome things He has provided us, we will be justly and richly rewarded. But, at the same time, we will also be tested, some more, some less. What happens, then, when the subjects begin to get impatient? ...wondering where He has gone...and when He will fulfill His promises.

3. One of the best descriptions of impatience in waiting upon the King of kings is found in an allegory of Fyodor Dostoevsky, famously known as *The Grand Inquisitor*. This insightful allegory, found in a chapter of his magnum opus, *The Brothers Karamazov*, has a Cardinal of the Church despairing of His Royal Majesty's Kingdom. As a result, even while remaining a Cardinal, while maintaining his position in the Church, he forms his own kingdom that he claims will save all mankind, or at least unite them in a fraternal union, provide for their need of mystery, wonder, authority, and allow them to indulge in sins of the flesh.
4. But something happens. The King of kings comes down to see him ... visit that might easily be considered analogous to an actual grace, pushing him toward reversion and repentance. Instead the Grand Inquisitor has Him arrested and then meets with Him in prison, saying, "'Is it Thou? Thou?' but receiving no answer, he adds at once. 'Don't answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us?'" Note well what the Cardinal says. Note well that the Grand Inquisitor rightly understands that the Doctrines and Truths of His Majesty's Kingdom are fixed... immutable. They are contained in the Deposit of the Faith, and cannot be changed. Hmmm.
5. The Inquisitor, then, states in so many words, that he rejects His Majesty's kingship and His deposit... That he will not go back to the old immutable truths of the faith. In a word, he will not allow this man, this God-man, to rule over him again, saying: "to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire." Sounds a bit like what the 15th Century Bishop of Beauvais, Pierre Cachon, did to St. Joan of Arc. After Charles VII was officially crowned king of France by Joan, this bishop declared in so many words: "we will not have this man reign over us!" And he proceeded to burn St. Joan at the stake to bring down her king.
6. How did the Grand Inquisitor fall so low? How could he refuse this profound actual grace of conversion? We find out in the allegory. First he complains that the provisions of the King of kings are ineffective, saying: "But Thou didst think too highly of men ... Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. ... I swear, man is weaker and

baser by nature than Thou hast believed him!" In other words, look around and see that there is error, heresy, apostasy, schism, sin, division, war, death, disease, poverty and so on. Christianity has been given 15 Centuries of trial...and has not worked. How many today have looked upon 19th and 20th Centuries and say the same? Think of WWI and WWII ... to some it appeared that Christianity failed us. Thus, the Inquisitor adds: "...unrest, confusion and unhappiness—that is the present lot of man after Thou didst bear so much for their freedom." The Cardinal was impatient, "hav[ing] grown weary waiting for Thee." ...waiting for the King's Promises to be fulfilled. He is claiming the way of the Lord does not work. His provisions are useless. Something else must be done!

7. Second, the Cardinal claims he has an incurable love for humanity, saying: "Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, and permitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction? Why has Thou come to hinder us?" This incurable love led him to seek a way to save all mankind and to unite him in a bond of brotherhood. Thus, he claims: "...we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man. ... uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious anthheap... [a] worldwide union."
8. The Cardinal explains that this is only possible by correcting the work of His Majesty, the King of kings, saying: "We have corrected Thy work..." To do this, the Inquisitor explains that he received enlightenment from "The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence..." He had help from the occult... help from below. He received this spirit's deposit of beliefs... which he acknowledges is the very same that was revealed to His Royal Majesty when tempted in the desert. With this occult help, the Cardinal openly challenged His King: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest. Know that I fear Thee not." He lost his fear of God and became against God... a-theistic.
9. This Cardinal Inquisitor then explains that he purposely left the path of the saints: "I awakened and would not serve madness [i.e., Christianity]. I turned back and joined the ranks of those who have corrected Thy work. I left the proud [i.e., those striving for holiness in the Catholic Church] and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble."
10. Finally, the Cardinal admits that in taking this route, he had to lie and allow sins to multiply: "...we shall allow them even to sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to

sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them..." "But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them... That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie."

11. In all this, we see an important image of what happens when men refuse to let the King of kings rule over them. They grow impatient with His gentle rule, weary of embracing the provisions He supplies while awaiting His return, and seek to take matters into their own hands by correcting His work. They justify themselves by claiming to be humble while seeking to save all men. They end by embracing evil that a good may come... most notably the evil of lies and allowing lust and adultery to pass uncorrected. Sound familiar? It seems we have some new Grand Inquisitors among us today.
12. Willy nilly this path leads to His Majesty once again being put out of the camp to die. In this story, we could easily see that it is really His Majesty's Mystical Body, the Church, that is to be nailed to stake and burned as Joan was for her Head and King Charles VII. Thus, the Inquisitor ends: "What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, to-morrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. To-morrow I shall burn Thee." But in the end the Cardinal could not fulfill his threat and Our Lord passed through the midst of them.
13. *For this was Christ Our Lord born...* For this He came into the world... to be the King of kings. His royal and divine Majesty has provided a Kingdom for His followers, fully established and equipped... a perfect society. He often visits His kingdom...in many ways. Among them, He grants us actual graces to embrace what He has given. Let us always respond to His graces, hold fast to His gifts and provisions, not giving way to impatience or to anyone trying to correct His work... no matter who they are or what position they hold!, and we will be rewarded abundantly. Otherwise, we too risk becoming another Grand Inquisitor or helping some new Grand Inquisitor already among us.