

CHRIST IS A KING WHO RULES WITH LOVE, SAYS PONTIFF Urges Catholics to Choose to Follow Jesus

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 22, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Christ is a King who dominates with love, who does not impose himself but rather respects human freedom, Benedict XVI is affirming. The Pope stated this today before praying the midday Angelus with the pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square, sending a message for the Solemnity of Christ the King.

The Pontiff affirmed that Christ's royalty is not like that of the great ones of the world, but rather, it is the power to defeat evil and death and to "awaken hope" even in the hardest of hearts.

On this last Sunday before the beginning of Advent, the Holy Father explained to the faithful that the power of Christ "is the divine power to give eternal life, to free from evil, to overcome the reign of death."

He continued: "It is the power of love, that knows how to bring good out of evil, soften a hard heart, bring peace to the most bitter conflict, awaken hope in the most impenetrable darkness.

"This Kingdom of Grace never imposes itself, and it respects our freedom."

Benedict XVI noted that "the title of 'king,' in reference to Jesus, is very important in the Gospels and allows a complete reading of his figure and his mission of salvation."

"We are able to see a progress in this regard," he observed. "First there is the expression 'King of Israel' and then we arrive at that of universal King, Lord of the cosmos and of history, therefore, far beyond the expectations of the Hebrew people themselves."

Before the grandeur of this royalty, the Pope affirmed, even with its paradoxical sign, the Cross, a choice becomes "necessary" for every conscience: "Whom do I want to follow? God or the evil one? The truth or the lie?"

He continued, "Choosing Christ does not guarantee success according to the criteria of the world, but it assures that peace and that joy that he alone can give."

"This is shown in every age," the Pontiff affirmed, "by the experience of many men and women who, in the name of Christ, in the name of truth and justice, knew how to oppose themselves to the enticements of earthly power with its different disguises, to the point of sealing this fidelity of theirs with martyrdom."