

“Viva Cristo Rey!”

The Mexican Constitution of 1917 imposed strict atheist policies, including banning public worship, closing churches, and expelling or persecuting priests.

By 1926, President Plutarco Elías Calles intensified these policies, leading to widespread resistance among Catholics, especially in rural areas.

Saint José Sánchez del Río was a 14-year-old boy who was tortured and killed for refusing to renounce his faith. His final words were reportedly, **“Viva Cristo Rey...!”** **“Long live Christ the King!”**

Many Catholics, called **Cristeros**, adopted **“Viva Cristo Rey!”** as their battle cry. They proclaimed allegiance to Jesus Christ as King in defiance of the government's oppression.

We can feel like we are in complete control of our own life. We can make enough money, have the type of relationships, jobs, friends, hobbies that we want.

However, we sometimes see the reality that we are not in charge: we see war in the middle east, war in Ukraine. We see political figures who we might not want to see in power elected. We have a health setback, a death in the family, work problems, financial issues, crisis of meaning and purpose, betrayal, and relationship breakdowns.

We need a sense of control. We need someone good and powerful in charge of this world, the church, and our personal life.

The bible talks about Jesus as king. The prophet Daniel says “I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man... on him was conferred sovereignty, glory and **kingship**.” Apocalypse says “everyone will see [Jesus Christ... ruler of the **kings** of the earth...]” In the Gospel of John, Jesus says

“Yes, I am a **king** ...” Jesus as king impacts the way Jesus’ followers live in society, in the church, and family.

Society - Jesus didn’t always agree with the civil or religious leaders of his time. However, he still paid taxes – “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give to God what belongs to God”. We should obey civil authorities – as long as it is in line with Christian faith and morals. We should challenge when authorities go against Jesus’ spirit. For example, Jesus had ‘compassion’ on those who were sick and dying. He received palliative care himself. He never promoted mercy killing.

The upcoming assisted suicide bill being debated in parliament goes against Jesus’ spirit of compassion. The word ‘compassion’ means literally, ‘to suffer with’. We should argue against assisted suicide, and promote palliative care. Dying with dignity means sharing in (medicated) suffering. It does not mean ending suffering prematurely. **Society** needs to grow in Jesus’ **compassion**.

Church - Jesus didn’t always agree with religious authorities – as difficult as this is for me to say! He told people to “do what they [the religious leaders] say, not what they do.” Jesus criticised the religious leaders. However, he didn’t leave the Jewish faith.

Don’t be scandalised when religious leaders fail. For example, many understandably feel angry, have been hurt deeply about the abuse and cover-ups scandals, and have left the church. Making Jesus king doesn’t mean rejecting the people of God, the church. Making Jesus king means being more like Jesus than religious leaders. Hold leaders accountable, yes. But don’t leave. Be better witnesses than your religious leaders.

Family – When someone said to Jesus that his mother, brothers, and sisters were outside looking for him, Jesus said “*You* are my mothers, brothers, and sisters.” Jesus loved Mary, his mother, and his kinsfolk. However, he loved God

above them. He treated everyone as family. Love your family by putting God first, and inviting others in.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is king. You have to make Jesus your king: obey civil law. Challenge civil laws when necessary.

Make Jesus your king: listen to religious leaders of the church, but be better witnesses of Jesus.

Make Jesus your king: love your family, by putting God first, inviting others in.

Make Jesus your personal king now.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you have made Jesus king of the universe!

Jesus, I make you king of my life in society. Help me to be a good citizen, and to challenge when necessary.

I make you king of my life at church. Help me listen to my leaders and to be a better witness.

I make you king of my life in my family. Help me love my family, by putting God first, and inviting others in.

Viva Christo Rey!