

Christ the King

THAT HE WOULD REIGN IN OUR HEARTS

In 1925, Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King in his encyclical letter *Quas Primas*, in response to growing nationalism and secularism around the world. He had the foresight to realize that secularism could soon wage awful wars against the Church.

During the early twentieth century, in Mexico, Russia, and in many parts of Europe, atheistic regimes threatened not just the Catholic Church and its faithful but civilization itself. Pope Pius XI's encyclical gave Catholics hope and—while governments of men around them crumbled—the assurance that Christ the King shall reign forever. Pope Pius XI said that Christ “reign[s] ‘in the hearts of men,’ both by reason of the keenness of his intellect and the extent of his knowledge, and also because he is very truth, and it is from him that truth must be obediently received by all mankind.”

While we hope and pray that the dark times of almost a century ago remain in the past, a troubling recent Pew Forum report shows that religious intolerance is on the rise worldwide, including in the United States. Therefore, we must remain vigilant when our first American freedom protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is threatened.

Religious liberty gives us the ability not just to worship at Mass but the freedom to feed the hungry, serve the needy, and tend to the sick. During this time when we come together as a nation in thanksgiving for our many blessings, let us thank God for the gift of religious liberty and ask that it not be taken for granted.

Prayer for the Protection of Religious Liberty

O God our Creator,
from your provident hand we have received our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
You have called us as your people and given us the right and the duty to worship you, the only true God, and your Son, Jesus Christ.



Through the power and working of your Holy Spirit, you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world, bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel to every corner of society. We ask you to bless us in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty. Give us the strength of mind and heart to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened; give us courage in making our voices heard on behalf of the rights of your Church and the freedom of

conscience of all people of faith.

Grant, we pray, O heavenly Father,
a clear and united voice to all your sons and daughters gathered in your Church
in this decisive hour in the history of our nation,
so that, with every trial withstood
and every danger overcome—
for the sake of our children, our grandchildren,
and all who come after us—
this great land will always be “one nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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What can you do to ensure the protection of religious liberty at home and abroad?

Text the word “freedom” to 377377 for updates from the bishops on current threats to religious liberty. Also, please visit www.usccb.org/freedom for more information on how you can take action to protect religious liberty!