

Today we celebrate the last Sunday in Ordinary Time with a special liturgy: The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. In the Gospel reading chosen for this year (Jn 18:33b-37), Jesus the King of the Universe reveals the unique and mysterious nature of His kingdom. While on trial before Pontius Pilot Jesus says, “My kingdom does not belong to this world . . . my kingdom is not here.” Furthermore, Jesus explains the distinct characteristic of those who belong to His other-worldly kingdom: “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice and does not belong to the world (cf. Jn 17:16). So, Jesus is the King of a kingdom which does not belong to this world and His subjects are those who belong to the truth, listen to His voice, and do not belong to this world.

Where is this strange kingdom which “is not here”? Jesus says, “If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you” (John 15:19, NAB). Thus, Jesus’ kingdom is located precisely within the souls of his disciples who, while still living in the world, have been “chosen out of the world” and have pledged allegiance to the truth of Christ which does not belong to this world – it belongs to God!

What does this mean for us? In order for us to have Jesus as our Lord and King, in order for us to belong to His kingdom, we must belong to the truth and listen to His voice as opposed to the voice which “belongs to the world.” Pope Pius XI explains what it means to have Christ as our king:

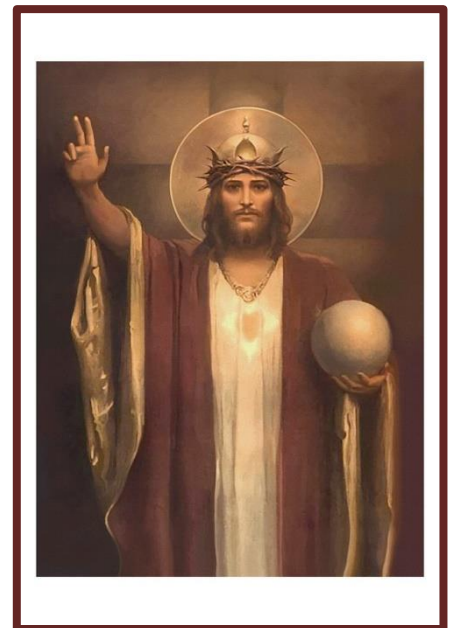
“He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls.” (Encyclical, *Quas primas*, 11).

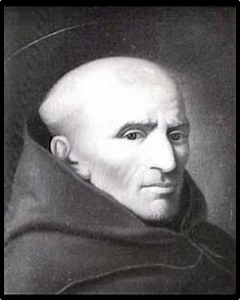
In a word, our minds, our wills, our hearts and our bodies must submit to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Of course, there is only one motive which could inspire such an absolute and comprehensive allegiance: love. In fact, love will not settle for anything less. St. Josemaria Escriva understood these great truths from personal experience:

“Our Lord and our God; how great you are! It is you who give our life supernatural meaning and divine vitality. For love of your Son, you cause us to say with all our being, with our body and soul: ‘He must reign!’ And this we do against the background of our weakness, for you know that we are creatures made of clay” (*Christ is Passing By*, #181).

If we want to be faithful Catholics, we must be willing to be unabashedly faithful to Jesus and His teaching, even if it means, as Jesus clearly states, the world will hate us. We must remember, Jesus was willing to be tortured, mocked, and ridiculed for us, does not love dictate that we should be willing to do the same for Him? Jesus is truly the King of the universe may He reign in our hearts today as we pledge our undying love for Him.

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples





## Saint Leonard of Port Maurice

**Feast Day: November 26**

**Born: December 19, 1676**

**Died: November 26, 1751**

**Patron of parish missions**

**Canonized: June 29, 1867 by Pope Pius IX**

Saint Leonard was born Paul Jerome Casanova in Port Maurice, Porto Maurizio, Italy. At 13, he went to Rome to live with his uncle and study at the Jesuit Roman College. In 1697, he joined the Friars Minor and was ordained in 1703. He began preaching all over the Tuscany region of Italy. By 1736 he was attracting huge crowds in Rome and elsewhere, and he erected almost six hundred Stations of the Cross throughout the lands.

Saint Leonard was one of the greatest missionaries in the history of the Church. He used to preach to thousands in the open square of every city and town where the churches could not hold his listeners. So brilliant and holy was his eloquence that once when he gave a two weeks' mission in Rome, the Pope and College of Cardinals came to hear him. The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus were his crusades. He was in no small way responsible for the definition of the Immaculate Conception made a little more than a hundred years after his death. He also gave us the Divine Praises, which are said at the end of Benediction. But Saint Leonard's most famous work was his devotion to the Stations of the Cross. Many sought him out for spiritual direction. His letters to advisees convey a commonsense Christianity, still fresh today, as the following example demonstrates:

“To speak quite frankly, my dear brother, I believe you are under a delusion. You seem to have got into your head the silly notion that it is impossible for you to live chastely. With this false principle fixed in your mind, at each temptation you immediately give up. True, without God's grace we cannot live a chaste life. But it is also true that God gives his grace to those who try their best. ‘From the man who does what lies in him God withholds not grace’ (see Psalm 84:11). So, when temptation comes, turn straight to God, and he will help you. He said so, clearly: ‘Seek and you shall receive’ (see Matthew 7:7). With God's help you will keep from sin. Impress, then, on yourself this great truth. Even if all hell's devils came against you to tempt you, you won't sin unless you want to— provided that you trust not in your own powers, but in the assistance of God. He doesn't refuse help to those who ask it with a lively faith. Of course, you must avoid dangerous occasions and keep guard over your eyes. Try it, and you will see the good results. Meanwhile, I recommend you to God, that he may give you the true spirit of penance and mortification without which it is no easy thing to triumph over so degrading a vice. May God bless you.”

Saint Leonard's preaching was marked by many extraordinary conversions. The power of his words coupled with his holiness and extraordinarily strict, simple, and penitential life made a deep impression on even the most hardened sinners. His life and teachings emphasize the importance of a deep, personal relationship with God, regular spiritual practices, and a constant awareness of one's eternal destiny. His methods for avoiding sin were rooted in a profound love for God and a desire to lead souls to salvation.

Two of Saint Leonard's works published in English include: *The Hidden Treasure: Holy Mass* and *The Little Number of Those who are Saved*.