



# The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

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## Homily at Mass Feast of Christ the King Year A – 22 November 2020

In February 1922, the Archbishop of Milan was elected Pope, and took the name Pius XI. He chose his motto: “The peace of Christ in the reign of Christ”. Everywhere he looked he saw the ravages of war: Germany, rebuilding after World War I; Italy and the Holy See still at logger heads since the unification of Italy in 1860, and the establishment of the kingdom of Italy in 1870 and the ongoing battle between the Popes and the Italian State, not resolved until 1929. Pius XI’s reign also saw the growth of fascism in Italy and the rise of Hitler and Nazism in Germany.

In 1925 Pope Pius established the feast we celebrate today, the feast of Christ the King, which literally crowns the liturgical year and completes it. Next week we begin a new year of grace with the first Sunday of Advent. Pope Pius wanted the whole world to fall under the gentle sway of Christ the King, “the reign of Christ” in order to begin to experience “the peace of Christ”. Perhaps Pope Francis was hoping for the same thing when in the first days of the world wide impact of Corona virus back in March, the Pope bought the revered icon of Our Lady Salus Populo Romano (health and safety of the Roman people) and an ancient miraculous crucifix into St Peter’s Square, and blessed the world with the Eucharist enthroned in a Monstrance. Many bishops followed his example, even blessing their dioceses from the sky in a helicopter.

Could we pause now and ask what ills, what things trouble us and trouble our world today? In some parts of the world the election of leaders is fraught with conflict and suspicion of fraud. New civil conflicts are breaking out in Eastern Europe and Africa. Violence and death on the streets of America and France.

Here in Australia were gone from long years of drought to life destroying bushfires. And we just shudder at the mention of the word “COVID”. For faithful and religious people this year meant no weekly church services, no public worship, no Easter, no Passover, no Ramadan, and Eid, no Diwali. For our families there’s been no proper funerals or weddings, no birthdays; for friends of mine, no big 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries.

Recent news articles have commented on the increased numbers of people presenting with mental health issues at our hospitals and a number of inquiries to counselling services and lawyers by people who feel that they simply can’t face the strains that this year has brought.

All of us have battled hard and long this year to steady ourselves and our families with “the peace of Christ”. It can be tempting to think that the violence of Nature, the impact of disease, even the power of the secular state when it demands that we close our churches and remain in our homes – that all of this is too strong a force against “the reign of Christ”. But when we look back on ourselves we do know where to turn: the reign of Christ has found its strength in our faith and prayer life.

Our buildings were closed in our suburbs, but thousands of little churches – the churches of the home and family – sprung into life. Perhaps the development of modern media, TV, internet, mobile phone, as well as old reliable books and Bibles and missals were meant just for times like these.

In moments of Holy Communion we cry out to Jesus our King for the blessing of his peace and the hope of his kingdom – now, today, among us, in our world:

Lord Jesus Lamb of God: grant us peace

Lord Jesus our King: thy kingdom come.