Solemnity of Christ the King ©
Who is your King?

We like starting and ending activities or actions at the end of a calendar year. In part I think that it is because the end of year serves as a clear benchmark, a clear end or starting point. If I start something in the New Year, it is easier for me to remember, easier for me to adhere to, psychologically it helps me correlate or compare. Since the end of the year is such a demarcation we associate superstitions, customs, traditions and resolutions to it. For example, my mom loves end of year traditions; she always gets 12 grapes for the countdown and makes a wish with each grape. I ask her if her wishes ever come true and she smiles because she knows that their realization is not dependent on the grapes, **yet she eats them every year…** I have a friend who bought a suitcase because she wanted to travel and for New Year, she walked around her block with an empty suitcase, because it was going to help her travel more the upcoming year... I remember when I was in high school, I was told that if you were talking on the phone when New Year hits, your relationship with the person you were talking to would flourish, well I had a girlfriend in high school and we closed the year talking on the phone, yet we broke up a couple of weeks later. **So, why do we do these superstitious acts, customs or traditions at the end of the year?**

One of the reasons why we do superstitious things even though deep inside we know that they are not changing the universe, is because we are naturally uncomfortable with uncertainty. The New Year represents the biggest annual unknown—12 full months of possibilities, risks, and changes. Superstitions give us a feeling of control.

Psychologically we create a perceived cause-and-effect relationship: "If I do X (eat 12 grapes), then Y will happen (I will have 12 months of prosperity)." This belief acts as a psychological armor against the anxiety of the future.

Another reason I feel we do these superstitions, customs or traditions is because these actions often thrive when they are shared by a community. These rituals become communal acts of bonding and tradition, establishing a shared sense of order in a chaotic world, we do them because others are doing them.

I think that at their heart, New Year's superstitions are used as tools for managing **anxiety**, fulfilling basic human wishes, and attempting to **control the uncertainty**. We can see them as reminders that at the end of every cycle, we are all looking for the same things: health, wealth, love, and a feeling that we have some control over what happens next.

Today we celebrate the solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. This solemnity marks the end of our liturgical year. We are concluding a cycle and starting a new one, although you might not have come to church today expecting a New Year celebration or a New Year's party, the last few weeks have been preparing us for today, it is a great celebration hence being a solemnity… **It is our Catholic Liturgical New Year.** It is interesting to me that although we have superstitions acts at the end of a calendar year, we do it in an effort to gain control and to lower our anxiety of the unknown, the uncertainty. Yet in the celebration of Christ the King, Christ is asking us to give him the control, to allow him to be our King. In the first reading today, we heard how the people of Israel went to David and asked him to be their king, to be their pastor, they were going to be like sheep. Sheep are docile, followers and dependent on their shepherd, sheep are **at peace because they have someone else in control.**

In the gospel we encounter Jesus's crucifixion, he being titled the King of the Jews, his conversation with the two thieves and how one mocks him for being the Christ, yet dying a similar death to him, the other asking for forgiveness and recognizing him as King. I think our Lord is asking us today to relinquish the control and the anxiety. He is telling us that we are coming to the end of another liturgical year and soon the end of a calendar year but that we shouldn't fear the unknown, that we shouldn't be anxious, that he is the Christ, the King of the Universe, he has it all under control and is only asking for our trust. In other words, the question that Jesus is asking us to reflect on as we start this New Year and the season of advent is, **Am I Your King?**

En el Evangelio encontramos la crucifixión de Jesús, su proclamación como Rey de los Judíos, su conversación con los dos ladrones y cómo uno se burla de él por ser el llamado Cristo, pero aun muriendo de la misma forma que el ladrón, mientras que el otro le pide perdón y lo reconoce como Rey. Creo que nuestro Señor nos pide hoy que renunciemos al control y a la ansiedad a querer ser reyes de nuestras vidas. Nos dice que estamos llegando al final de otro año litúrgico, pero que no debemos temer a lo desconocido, que no debemos angustiarnos, que él es el Cristo, el Rey del Universo, que lo tiene todo bajo control y que solo nos pide nuestra confianza. En otras palabras, la pregunta que Jesús quiere que reflexionemos al comenzar este nuevo año y el Adviento es: **¿Soy Yo tu Rey?**