

The Solemnity of Christ the King

The Dunedain
Rings

A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's *Lord of the*

Here is a wonderful passage from the Book of Wisdom. It was given to us by the Church in the Bible and also found in the prayer of the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours (Psalter, Week 3, Saturday Morning Prayer):

God of my fathers, Lord of mercy,
you who have made all things by your Word
and in your wisdom have established man
to rule the creatures you have made,
to govern the world in holiness and justice,
and to render judgment in integrity of heart.

Is this perhaps the prayer of the king? It would have been the prayer of Adam until he sinned. For until then, he had integrity of heart. Certainly - I think - it could have been King David praying for the charism (gift) of wisdom and integrity. For that matter it could have been any one of the Davidic kings.

Now let's go one step further. In the idea made popular by Peter Kreeft, the idea that "Middle-earth is our earth," this prayer could have been said in Middle-earth. It could have been the prayer of the King of Gondor, Aragorn son of Arathorn. Although God is not explicitly in the Lord of the Rings, Kreeft says that God is in *The Lord of the Rings* "as the sun is in sunlight."¹

I think that anyone acquainted with this epic trilogy can just picture Aragorn trying his best to rule Middle-earth "in holiness and justice" and doing his best "to render justice in integrity of heart." "*Integrity of heart*" means that all the virtues are there, ruled by that "charioteer of all virtues," the cardinal virtue of prudence. Furthermore, it means that - in the man of integrity - the emotions, which are good in themselves, are under the command of reason. Even before his coronation, as the greatest Numenorean Ranger, Strider was the great guardian of the hobbits and a great healer. These are - beyond doubt - royal qualities. And the most real and royal king of all is - beyond any shadow of doubt - the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ. He won the inner battle against Satan and the powers of darkness and He is - of course - the greatest Man of integrity that ever lived! As the author of the Book of Wisdom intimates and as St. John the Evangelist states in the holy Gospel, Jesus is the Word of God by whom all things were made. Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever!

¹ Peter Kreeft, *The Philosophy of Tolkien: The Worldview Behind The Lord of the Rings* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005).