

Christ the King (34th Wk yr B)



34th Sunday Year B
John 18:33-37

33 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked. 34 Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?' 35 Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' 36 Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.' 37 'So you are a king then?' said Pilate. 'It is you who say it,' answered Jesus. Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

Other readings: Daniel 7:13-14 Psalm 92 (93) Apocalypse 1:5-8

The final Sunday in our liturgical year is the feast of Christ the King. The theme of the kingship of Christ should not be misunderstood. Jesus is not king in an earthly sense. The acclamations of the crowds on Palm Sunday and the enthusiastic endorsement of the disciples that Jesus is the Messiah might mislead us. Jesus is king, Jesus is Messiah, because he is the anointed one of God, who comes to do the will of God. For the evangelist John, Christ's kingship is revealed above all on the cross. In the dialogue with Pilate in the Fourth Gospel Jesus points Pilate in the right direction: his kingdom is not an earthly one. He came 'to bear witness to the truth'. Those who seek the truth are members of his kingdom, which our liturgy today describes in the Preface as 'a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace'. Pilate's dismissive answer to Jesus will be 'Truth, what is that?'

Reading the gospels throughout the liturgical year we are presented with a choice, whether, like Pilate, to pursue earthly values or, alternatively, to pursue the truth. In each of the four gospels Jesus bears witness above all to the truth that God is a God of love to be loved without reserve. We see that above all in his triumph on the cross.

Our second reading today from the Book of the Apocalypse speaks of Jesus as one 'who loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood'. His death brings us forgiveness and is our liberation. He is king because he leads us to the fulness of life and to the truth. He has made us 'a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father'. The vocation of each one of us is to lead others to the truth we have come to know through Jesus and to make of our lives a gift of service to our loving God.

In what sense is Jesus a king?

Do I realise that at Baptism I became a member of the kingly and priestly people of Christ?

Let us pray that we may always be faithful to the truth we have learnt from Christ.

We pray that, with our brothers and sisters who have gone before us in faith, we may come to share in God's kingdom of truth and love.