

HOMILY "CHRIST THE KING" - YEAR B  
(Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 93; Rev 1:5-8; John 18:33-37)  
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A wife heard her husband come back into the house not too long after he had left. She said, "Hon, I thought you were going to your lodge meeting." "It was postponed," He replied, "The wife of the Grand Exalted Invincible Supreme Potentate wouldn't let him attend tonight."

Did you notice the headlines after Princess Diana died? "Will the monarchy last? Monarchy in trouble."

Put your trust in an eternal monarch. Listen to, and serve, Jesus the King.

The readings today build upon one another. They proclaim that Jesus is King; that his kingdom is eternal; that Jesus is Messiah, Savior and that he is love, as well as the truth. Jesus is "the truth" in that he reveals who God is, in his own person, words and actions. So today, the mystery is revealed for us: Jesus is Savior; King; Love, and Truth.

Kings are usually associated with power and authority. All too often, in our world, the world of Pilate, power and authority are associated with domination, deception, corruption, exploitation. Think sponsorship scandal, Enron, Nortel, to name only a few.

It is not so with Jesus, our king. Here is what Corbin Eddy, priest, pastor and professor, has to say in his homily for this Sunday:

"The scene from Jesus' trial before Pilate turns any ordinary understanding of power or use of power on its head. There is perhaps more dramatic irony at work in this story than anywhere else in the New Testament. Pilate, who thinks he has power, in fact has none. The power that he seems to have (to put Jesus to death) is politically the only expedient thing to do. Pilate is powerless and he knows it. Jesus, who appears utterly powerless, is strangely powerful in his nobility; he seems to understand where real power comes from and what it means. His power transcends political status and social influence; his kingdom is 'not of this world.'"

Fr. Eddy continues: "The story itself is structured around the physical movements of Pilate in and out of his headquarters. The Passover was so near that the religious authorities (who were eager to exercise their own limited version of power and authority) couldn't come inside without ritual defilement; their piety is contrasted with their scheming to bring the Word-made-flesh, the Messiah, the King of Israel, to his ultimate end as Lamb of God. The power they think they have to bring this whole 'Jesus thing' to an end actually brings it to fulfillment. Ironically, their impiety towards Jesus accomplishes God's work."

So Jesus is a King who exercises a totally different kind of power. And that has great implications for us. There are two sides to this mystery. In coming to know who Jesus is, we come to know who we are, through our response to him. Thus the disciple who responds to and lives out this word of Jesus, especially his love shown on the cross, is responding to the "truth,"

is “of the truth.” If a disciple bases his life on Jesus’ self revelation, Jesus becomes Lord of their lives, their King.

The readings teach us more about who we are, in the light of who Jesus is. The second reading from the book of Revelations, affirms that we are the *beloved, truly loved* by God. Henri Nouwen, renowned spiritual writer, wrote a book entitled, “Lives of the Beloved” in which he stresses the all-important truth that we find hard to believe, “We are loved!” As well, the second reading continues, we are *holy, set free from sin*. On top of that we are not just in the kingdom, *we ARE the kingdom of God*; we are made into the kingdom. Thus the kingdom of God is not just some future abstract hope; in us as disciples, it is becoming a present reality, here and now. We are the kingdom of God, through our acceptance of Jesus as King. That ties in nicely with my motto as bishop: “Regnum Dei Intra Vos” – the kingdom of God is among you.

That awesome reality and mystery, carries an awesome responsibility and task. The readings today suggest two clear tasks of the disciple, the participant in the kingdom of God. We must *listen to his voice*, and *serve him in others*. Jesus tells Pilate plainly, “Everyone who belongs to the truth, that is, to Jesus, must listen to my voice.” We must spend time in quiet prayer and reading of Scripture, to listen to the master’s voice and discover his will in our lives. And then, we must serve as Jesus did, constantly seek to carry out the will of God in the way we relate to ourselves, others, God and all of creation, in a life style of humble service. In the words of Mother Theresa, “What we would do for Jesus, whom we cannot see, we can do to our neighbor, whom we can see, and we will be doing it to Jesus.”

Added to this is the invitation to exercise whatever power and authority we have as employers, parents, employees, as Jesus did – to exercise the power of powerlessness, the power of attraction, forgiveness, truthfulness and integrity. That is our challenge – to live as Jesus did as we seek to build up the Kingdom of God here on earth which will always be a work in progress.

In the meantime, in the midst of our hard work and best efforts, we stand with open hands and open hearts to pray as Jesus taught us: “Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed by thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

That prayer has a wonderful ring to it on this feast of Christ the King, on this last Sunday of the church’s year of grace. We move on in hope – and humility.

The Eucharist we celebrate today is a faith meal, a banquet with our King, who nourishes us by his Word, and his Body and Blood, so that, empowered by his Spirit, we may have the will and the love to go out, having first listened to his Word, to serve our brothers and sisters out of Christ-like love.

So, put your humble faith and trust in an eternal monarch - listen to, and serve, Jesus the King.