

Feast of Christ the King – November 21 & 22, 2015

First Reading: Danial 7:13-14

Second Reading: Revelations 1:5-8

Gospel: John 18: 33b-37

“I am the Alpha and the Omega’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” The beginning and the end – and everything in between. These lines from Revelations are an invitation to us to stop and reflect on God’s kingdom.

The Almighty – all powerful; omnipotent; supreme; preeminent – this is also how in the past people spoke of kings. Kings from which came every power. Kings who were believed to have been appointed by God. It is a powerful reading - one full of triumph and majesty.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – the feast of Christ the King. Happy Feast Day!

Here in Canada we do not have kings or queens, princes or princesses. And although I am not unfamiliar with this feast day – I am not usually in the habit of thinking much about it, what it means, how it might be relevant in my life. Preparing for this reflection has been a gift, a grace from God.

In the Gospel we listen to John’s account of Jesus before Pilate – it’s a story which we are accustomed to hearing - in Holy Week. As I mention Holy Week I think of the Cross – not the usual image that we find when speaking of kingship and royalty.

William Barclay maintains that “no one can read this story without seeing the sheer majesty of Jesus”. He goes on to add “When someone faces him, it is not Jesus who is on trial; it is that person.” (Pilate) [...] We cannot help feeling that it is Jesus who in control [...] “The majesty of Jesus never shone more radiantly than in the hour when he was on trial before the world.”

When Pilate asks if Jesus is a king – he responds with: “My kingdom is not from this world.” And then a little further he say: “**You** say that I am King. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” But notice Jesus does not say out-right that he is king.

The Feast of Christ the King. Christ was not family name, not the last name of Jesus. Christ comes from the Greek word ‘Christos’ which means anointed, in Hebrew that would be Messiah – Savior. It is a title. Jesus is the Christ and he is the Savior, certainly by his birth, but also by his death and resurrection. Jesus, the Christ, King of the Universe. And I realise as I am speaking that once again the image of the Cross is before us. That Cross which we will celebrate on Good Friday is also with us today as we celebrate the Kingdom of God.

I must confess that not only have I not thought a lot about the Kingship of Jesus the Christ, or about the kingdom of God - I have never really consciously connected Christ the King with the Cross. Yet it seems that to experience one is to experience the other.

I find myself a little exuberant and joyful over this. I am celebrating the Feast of Christ the King of the Universe. To say it is to make it so, to make it real and lived and not just some words in the Sunday Missal that we hear once a year.

So - How do we love?

How do our lives celebrate the kingdom of God?

Do we live lives that testifies to the truth of Christ the King?

Pope Francis in his 2014 homily for the Feast of Christ the King said: “The starting point of salvation is not the confession of the sovereignty of Christ, but rather the imitation of Jesus’ works of mercy through which he brought about his kingdom. The one who accomplishes these works shows that he has welcomed Christ’s sovereignty, because he has opened his heart to God’s charity. In the twilight of life we will be judged on our love for, closeness to and tenderness towards our brothers and sisters. ...Through

his victory, Jesus has opened to us his kingdom. But it is for us to enter into it, beginning with our life now, by being close in concrete ways to our brothers and sisters who ask for bread, clothing, acceptance, solidarity, [refuge]. If we truly love them, we will be willing to share with them what is most precious to us, Jesus himself and his Gospel.”

Our Savior the Christ, King of the Universe - before us on the cross and resurrected.

This is our King – a king like no other king has been or will be.

Well this is the day of our Lord and King –let us rejoice and give thanks.

Resources:

Pope Francis – Homily from Christ the King Sunday, 2014

William Barclay – The New Daily Study Bible – The Gospel of John