

Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!

John 18:33-37

‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ Pilate asked. Jesus replied, ‘Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?’ 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?’ 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.’ ‘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.’

Today's Gospel presents a stark contrast between the imperial model represented by Pilate and the Kingdom vision of Jesus. It is a dramatic scene. Pilate mounted on his throne is totally in control and the epitome of worldly power. Jesus on the other hand is totally powerless and vulnerable. The contrast of power and vulnerability, prestige and wretchedness, fame and ignominy, success and failure could not be more striking.

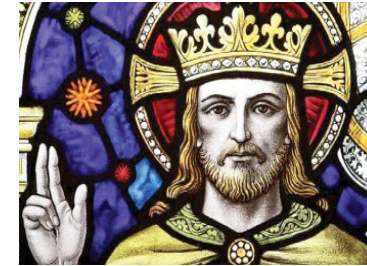
Yet there is something beyond the naked eye for those who discern the truth. Just as at the scene of the crucifixion when Jesus is dying he assured the repentant thief of his Father mercy and the eventual triumph; here the Kingdom vision also shines through the darkness of hate. Here it is Jesus who judges and rejects Pilate's imperial behaviour which depended on violence, dominance and exclusion. In its place, Jesus teaches and embodies a vision of an inclusive community, bound by a bond of communion, solidarity and service. All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.

Do I live by the Gospel and its values? How do I live Gospel values with my family, friends, parish and local community?

THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

Year B

21st November 2021



Today we reach a triumphant end to the liturgical year. Through the year we've been hearing the stories about Jesus and his life among us. Our journey has taken us through many different landscapes. There've been the open plains of day to day life in ordinary times when we have heard the extra-ordinary stories of what Jesus said, how he healed the sick and reached out to the most unlikely members of society. There have been shadowy valleys of temptation, betrayal and death on the cross. Wilderness times of despair and devastating suffering. There have been mountain tops of breath-taking excitement: resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. For a while now the scenery around us has been that of the Kingdom of God and the imminent return of Christ as King and Judge and now we have reached this, the highest peak on our journey. From here we can look back and see where we have travelled and how all the paths were always leading to this place even if it didn't always seem so at the time.

Because we have this vision of Christ as King we are inspired and empowered to return next week (Advent) to the starting point and begin the journey again.

Opening Prayer

Almighty ever-living God, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of the universe, grant, we pray, that the whole creation, set free from slavery, may render your majesty service and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.

Daniel 7:13-14

I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

In the first reading, we hear a message of hope concerning the arrival of the messianic era. The Book of Daniel was written during the great turmoil in Israel. God's people had returned from exile and had rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. But the peace was short-lived, and Israel quickly came under the yoke of a new taskmaster, the Roman Empire. There seemed to be no end in sight to the cycle of oppression and resistance. Yet, it was in the depth of despair that Daniel envisions a new future for his people. Like Isaiah, Ezekiel before him or perhaps modern prophets after him like Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Daniel speaks of new universal community of the human family. He dreams of the day when all peoples, nations and languages led by the one like a son of man come together to worship the one true God. It is an extraordinary inclusiveness given Israel's belief in its own special status. It is also a rejection of violence, dominance and power in favour of universal love and community. Daniel challenges true believers not to give in to the despair that arises from the supposed impossibility of change. We may feel numbed and overwhelmed by the seemingly unchangeable status quo but Daniel shows us that it is possible to reframe the harsh reality around us into a vision of hope. In my everyday life how do I show and express solidarity, compassion and justice to all whom I encounter?

Psalm 92(93):1-2,5

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed; the Lord has robed himself with might, he has girded himself with power.

The world you made firm, not to be moved; your throne has stood firm from of old. From all eternity, O Lord, you are.

Truly your decrees are to be trusted. Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.

Apocalypse 1:5-8

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the First-Born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. It is he who is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over him. This is the truth. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega' says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

The second reading is from the Book of Revelation. Today we are given a prophecy that at the end of time, everyone will see the Lord Jesus, even those who have pierced Him by their sins. This is not a prophecy of universal salvation but a prophecy that at the end each of us will see the Lord. This is the judgment that is to come. Will we accept Him as Lord? How do I ask for forgiveness for the times when I have wounded and turned away from Jesus?

Prayer over the Offerings

As we offer you, O Lord, the sacrifice by which the human race is reconciled to you, we humbly pray, that your Son himself may bestow on all nations the gifts of unity and peace.

Prayer after Communion

Having received the food of immortality, we ask, O Lord, that, glorying in obedience to the commands of Christ, the King of the universe, we may live with him eternally in his heavenly kingdom.