

HIS TRUTH
THE REIGN OF CHRIST
John 18: 33-37
November 24, 2024

I speak to you in the name of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today is the Reign of Christ and I have taken the words of several people of faith to assist me with my sermon this morning.

The Reign of Christ is an important day in the church calendar. On this holy day we are encouraged to think what our world will look like when Christ comes again and when all the world will be at peace. "The Reign of Christ marks the last Sunday of our liturgical year and next week, the 1st of Advent, we begin a new year - Year C. Our gospel readings are divided into Year A, Year B. and Year C.

Today we consider how Christ might reign in our lives and this world. We consider how Jesus is a monarch not in the political sense of the word but in the sense of ruling our hearts, minds and actions. Jesus is speaking about a Kingdom, one that exists beyond our sight and definition and he is also speaking of a deep truth in life: that we are loved and known by Him. Jesus wants us to appreciate that life is a blessing and that we need to live in gratitude and growth when we come to know this truth. God has richly blessed us and now invites us to be guided to see this more deeply.

Jesus was the bridge, the path, that led to the resurrection to new life and a new relationship with God. Jesus continues to invite us deeper into exploring this kind of kingdom, not of riches but richness of life and living. As we go about our daily living, and interacting with others, we must see Christ's presence in all people."

And now to our gospel reading for today:

We are all familiar with law and order type shows. Everyone involved from the accused to the jury, all want the same thing - the truth!. In fact, **truth** in our everyday dealings is what we all desire even if the truth sometimes causes us pain.

Our gospel reading opened with Pilate interrogating Jesus. Pilate, to his mind, is asking Jesus a simple question: "Are you the king of the Jews?", and he wants a simple answer - yes or no. Jesus turns the table on his inquisitor and he asks a question, "Do you ask this on your own or did others tell you about me?" Jesus says, "My kingdom is not from this world", and he goes on to say: "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate was probably exasperated by this back and forth. He wanted a simple answer and to his mind it would finally be **the** answer that would incriminate Jesus and put this *Jesus business* to rest once and for all. What Pilate wanted was the truth and nothing but the truth!

My question is, What is the truth that Jesus is speaking about? Jesus says, "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Yet it is our human nature to listen not only to our own voice but to other voices which can lead us away from the teachings of Jesus. Jesus' truths can be tough to follow and obey.

We listen to many voices especially those that think and act like us. We listen to the voice of our political party, our country, to the voice of fear and insecurity. We listen to the voice of prejudice, as well as our individual needs and desires. We've all heard those voices and they do often speak the truth but it is only a piece of the truth. They remind us the world is not always safe and life is not always easy. But I also know, this: there is THE ONE VOICE that speaks from a kingdom not of this world.

When Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life...", he was telling us in no uncertain terms what his expectations were if we were to be his followers. And he has for all time and for all generations voiced words of encouragement, words of forgiveness, words of hope and words of love - a guide in which we can navigate our lives in order to become part of his kingdom.

We seek the voice of Jesus in these words of truth, reassurance and comfort such as: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt. 25:20) when we are in the midst of uncertainty and fear.

In the darkness of death, there is a voice that says, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live." (John 11:25)

In the sea of human diversity, people who think, act and believe differently than us, there is a voice that says, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Mark 12:31)

In a world with battle lines drawn and enemies named, there is a voice that says, "Love your neighbour and pray for those who persecute you." (Mt.5:44)

In the midst of humanitarian need there is a voice that says, " I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Mt. 25:35)

In the midst of today's refugee crisis, there is a voice that says, "You shall love the foreigner as yourself." (Lev. 19:34)

In the pain of a broken heart, hurt feelings, betrayals, there is a voice that says, "If any one has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you. (Col. 3:13

In our second reading John talks about 7 spirits. Who gives these gifts and and what are they? The Holy Spirit is the gift giver and the gifts are:

- 1) The spirit of Wisdom
- 2) The spirit of Understanding
- 3) The spirit of Counsel
- 4) The spirit of Fortitude
- 5) The spirit of Knowledge
- 6) The spirit of Piety
- 7) The spirt of the fear of the Lord

I believe the core element of all these gifts is TRUTH. As followers of Jesus, this is what we seek in that one voice that calls us to be better people.

In every time and every place, in every situation, there is always the voice of Jesus. It is always speaking to us. It speaks in today's world, in your life and in mine. That's the voice we all want and need to listen to. That's the **TRUTH** in which we all want to belong.

Let us pray:

O God, be present in our lives, guide us in living the kingdom that Jesus spoke about. Help us to be the body of Christ that he hoped for us...people of compassion, faith, trust and truth. Help us to be not satisfied with the goals of this world but rather seek a higher calling which reflects a higher kingdom: one of Peace and Justice. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our guide and hope. **AMEN.**