

Christ the King 2021

John 18:33-37

Each Gospel tells us that Jesus was officially condemned as King of the Jews. **Pilate**, the Roman governor, would not have been interested in any purely religious charge. We owe to the Gospel of John some explanation of the real nature of Jesus' kingship.

The theme first emerges at the Feeding of the 5000. At its conclusion, John tells us that Jesus fled alone up the mountain because the crowd wanted to make him king. Obviously, they had the wrong idea of his kingship. As a nation, under foreign rule, they were looking for a liberator to deliver them, much as David long ago had freed their ancestors from the Philistines.

Again, crowds tried to make him king as he entered Jerusalem; this time he sat on a donkey to demonstrate the nature of his kingship. On trial before Pilate, Jesus is asked whether he is king of the Jews. He replies with a question for Pilate; why was he asking about his kingship? The reader knows that for this evangelist, *it is Pilate who is on trial before Jesus*.

The blunt roman answers with a practical question, "What have you done?" The reply shows that he and Jesus live on different planes. Jesus does not deny that he has a kingdom, his is a kingdom with no home in this world. If it had, he would like earthly rulers have had subjects or servants, but we know from the Last Supper that his disciples were no longer servants but **friends**.

But Pilate wanted an answer. So, Jesus admitted that he was a king, and offered a definition of his kingship in terms of his mission. ***This was to witness to the truth, to be the revealer of the Father to the world.*** The members of his kingdom were those who listen to his voice and his revelation, like the sheep who recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd.

I know that my homilies are not what some are used to, let alone expect. And that is OK, I am used to getting feedback, and I appreciate it very much. In my homilies I try to go deeper than just the usual canned or superficial deliveries. If you are looking for another style, that is OK, and I encourage you to look elsewhere to get fed by the gospel message.

Bro. Paul and I have an arrangement where he presents his thoughts and reflections on the Sunday Readings in our Sunday Bulletin, and I present my own in the homily. I encourage you to read his 'musings' to get another view in a different style than mine. And I assure you, his also will not be canned or superficial.

And lastly, don't forget to read the reflections in our booklet, ***Give Us This Day***. Today's guest is Richard Rohr, and his take is very interesting, especially if you have leanings in astronomy and the Big Bang or are familiar with Teilhard de Chardin and his ***Omega Point***.

There is just one thing that struck me from today's gospel. Jesus is now standing before Pilate and literally giving the reason he is there. Let me review what Pilate said to Jesus, "Your own nation and chief priests handed you over to me!" And then he asked him, "What have you done?"

"I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." That is why I like Richard Rohr's reflection. Within this span of time, after 14.6 billion years from the Big Bang, "...the Christ, to reveal who God is in the universe...is a revelation of the mystery of God from the beginning to end."

Here is the amazing thing, Jesus died because God allowed us to kill his only begotten Son. Think about that. Jesus discerned that if he continued to follow the course of non-violence through love, he would die a horrible death. Jesus discerned the will of God for him was to stay the course. Remember, Jesus is like us in all things, except sin, and even he had to discern his Father's will. Otherwise, why would there be an agony in the garden. "Let this chalice pass from me, but your will be done."

God allows us to choose: the price of free will, to love God in return of our own choosing.

As we come to the end of this Church Year, we take inventory by asking ourselves, have we heard the ***voice of the Good Shepherd***, and second, ***have we acted on his Word, his Good News***: Fifty-two Sundays out of the Year. Did it change us? Did we make any changes in our lives, any monumental decisions? Did the Good News move us deeply even once? These are important questions, because why move on to another year if this past year had no effect?!

It is in this discernment process that we try to know what the ***will of God*** is for us. Just as Jesus discerned that his mission was not to become a military leader for Israel against the Romans, nor was it to become a Bread King, as John's gospel mentions after the feeding the 5000. Jesus' answer to Pilate was that he was the witness to the truth. How have we courageously lived the truth in our lives this past Church Year making decisions that may have changed us at least spiritually?