

## **Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – John 18:33b-37**

“When we think of **royalty**,” writes Sr. Anita, “we envision fine robes and jewel-filled crowns. We think of mighty rulers and heads of state. The people in Jesus’ day sought such a king, one to deliver them from tyranny of Rome. The Gospels, though, point to a different kind of king, one who shows us that the way to God, the way to peace, was through humble service. What a countercultural claim!” This reflection is from *Give Us This Day*.

Dr. Agnes Brazal writes in *Catholic Woman Preach*, “The Book of Revelation, from which the second reading is taken, likewise speaks of a vision of a beast, which the majority of scholars agree refers to the Roman Empire. The Book of Revelation likens the Roman instruments of propaganda and indoctrination to “frogs” that capture the prey **with their tongues**.

“Jesus, referred to as the ruler of the kings of the earth in Revelation, is the antithesis of these political powers. In the gospel, we read about him proclaiming: **“I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”** In contrast, Pilate, the Roman governor interrogating Jesus, is not interested in the truth at all, but only in winning favor in the eyes of the local citizens.”

“The Crucifixion of Jesus and the death of so many martyrs for faith and justice show that the promotion of God’s reign is not easy and entails sacrifice. The powers that be will not readily give up their dominion. But our faith provides us with the basis of hope that, in the end, **it is God’s reign that will last forever.**”

Dr. Agnes reminds us that “...the Solemnity of Christ the King was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 in response to fascism that enveloped Italy in the 1920s. Today, she writes, we are witnessing again the revival of populist rhetoric, fascism, and the undermining of democracies. Then and now, these regimes have relied on propaganda, indoctrination, and what we call today disinformation or alternative facts. The celebration of the Solemnity of Christ the King is an important reminder to Christians of what constitutes God’s reign and true Christian leadership.

“Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice,” is a statement that is at the core of today’s gospel. It is the major challenge that faces us today. Who is right or wrong? How do we tell the difference? How do we keep from getting captured as prey to the tongues of propaganda and indoctrination?

Listening to the voice of Jesus should be a daily practice, a daily reflection on the scriptures. *Give Us This Day* is just that, a lectionary of the daily readings but daily reflections on the Voice of the Lord must go beyond just reading and reflection. We also need to allow God into our lives by simply practicing his attributes. And what are the attributes of God? Simply these, God is Beauty, Truth, Goodness, Justice, and Love.

Why are these attributes of God important for us today? Since truth is being challenged, the other attributes of beauty, goodness, justice, and love add as a check and a guide to the truth that is God’s. To be fully in touch with the truth of God we also need to be in touch with beauty, goodness, justice, and love. An “ugly lie” can be caught by how the person practices the other attributes of God in their lives, or the lack there of.

To be kept from being caught in the lies of the sticky tongue of the frog, the Christian needs to be living these attributes in their own lives daily. And beauty seems to be the main key to them all, a beauty which is present not only in art, music, literature, but even in math and science.

Dr. Kenneth writes in his article **No Atheists In Art Galleries**, February 2021 issue of *The Catholic Telegraph*, “Beauty is not an abstract concept, but, rather, the name we give to human creative endeavors that, we believe, conforms to standards of order and purpose—that reveal the beauty of the mind of God.”

Dr. Levri, who also wrote an article in the same issue, writes, “To some, beauty might seem to be superfluous...But I maintain that if we lose beauty, then we will lose our spiritual sight...We will cease to have reverence for the presence of God.” I agree with her and would add that beauty hints at the presence of God. Dr. Levri also points out that at the end of her article, “For when beauty calls,” she says, “we can be sure that the Lord is very close at hand.”