



Bible Study the Solemnity of Christ the King Year B

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"Jesus answered, you say I am a 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." Jn. 18:37 NABRE

Reading I: Daniel 7:13-14

TELL THE TRUTH: In a recent address, Pope Francis remarked that Christians are called to not only refrain from telling falsehoods, but to conduct their entire lives – both words and actions – as a witness to the Truth that is Jesus Christ. He said, *"Let us ask ourselves: what truth do the works of us Christians attest to, our words, our choices?"* Everyone can ask themselves: *am I a witness to the truth, or am I, more or less, a liar disguised as a true person?"*

Truth may be defined as a moral and personal characteristic of God: He is "the God of truth" (Isa. 65:16). Jesus is the Word of God who became flesh. He is the only Son of the Father and is full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14). Everything Jesus said was true, because he told what he heard from God the Father. (Jn. 8:40). As Christians, we are required to tell and

WHAT IS TRUTH?

live the truth, while we live in this world of materialism and deception.

The church year closes with the solemn celebration of Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe. The truth is that as citizens of the United States, we do not have a king. So, it may be difficult for our democratic minds to grasp how one individual can have absolute control over our lives. But as Christians, we surrender all that we have and are to Jesus Christ, who is the King and Creator and ruler of all things.

When Daniel had his vision in the first reading, Israel had no king. The Jews had been vanquished and exiled to Babylon. (Dan. 1:1-2) Their condition did not reflect the truth of who they were, so God gave them hope. He gave Daniel visions of a divine rescue by one like a "Son of Man". This is a term that Jesus would later apply to Himself (vv. 13-14). The "Son of Man" who comes amid "clouds" signifies His divine character. (Ex. 34:5; Lv. 16:2; and Nm. 11:25) The Son of Man who comes before the "Ancient One", who is God, the Father Almighty, receives glory, authority and kingship over all nations. His rule, that is His Church, will last forever. Daniel's vision told the truth about the coming of Jesus Christ and the absolute power of God (v. 14).
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Tell the truth. What has the greatest power and influence over your life? Is there a part of your life over which God does not have control?

KINGS, KINGDOMS AND RULERS

The Bible used the title king not only of human rulers, but also of God as the Supreme Ruler of the world (Ps 47:2,7; Matt 5:35). As the Creator of the world, it is His right to rule the universe. Only by His authority do earthly kings reign (Deut 10:17; Dan 4:17).

Christ Jesus the Messiah was born a king (Matt 2:2), came preaching the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), died as a king (Mark 15:32), and will yet be seen as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16). He functions as a King-Priest (Heb 5:6; 7:1; Rev 11:15), enabling us to become heirs of the kingdom which He has established through His sacrificial death on the cross. (King -from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Reading II: Revelation 1:5-8

TELL THE TRUTH. The truth is that Jesus Christ is everything from A to Z, from the beginning to the end. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the center of our joy.

This introduction to the Book of Revelation praises Jesus Christ as the one who has established a people of peace who are sustained by His love. The second reading for this Sunday starts in the middle of a sentence in verse 5 and skips the salutation in Rev. 1:1-3. Here we see the truth that the message of Revelation is both a message from Jesus to His churches and from God about the coming judgment. St. John, who also refers to the seven churches as the "seven stars" (vv. 11, 20), is the messenger (vv. 4-7). In this greeting, God is described as the absolute truth, the One who is, who was and who is to come. The reference to Jesus Christ as the faithful witness establishes Jesus as the "Truth" and is not simply a reference to His death (v. 5). It complements the title, "The first born of the dead" which refers to the truth of Jesus' resurrection. The doxology (a formula for worship) that follows, exhorts all Christians to worship the True God who "loves us and released us from sin by His blood" (v. 6). The truth is that He will come again in power and glory.
DISCUSSION QUESTION: Do you see a connection between this reading and the first reading from the Book of Daniel?

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Gospel: John 18: 33b-37

TELL THE TRUTH! As Christians, we are all in search of the truth. In this regard, C. S. Lewis wrote; *"If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort, you will not get either comfort or truth, only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair."* The truth may not always be comfortable for us, as it forces us to see ourselves as we really are. It forces us to confront the evil within us. Tell the truth and shame the devil, is a well-known saying.

While we celebrate the Solemnity of the Feast of Christ the King, the Gospel presents Jesus before a failed Roman governor who has the power to sentence Jesus to death. But we should consider this question: Is the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus a search for truth?

Pilate's question to Jesus, (v. 33) "Are you a king", resonates in all four synoptic gospels. This is consistent, but not conclusive evidence that the chief priests accused Jesus of being anti-Roman and a king in His own right. This would have been a charge of insurrection and rebellion. (Jn. 18:28, 29; 19:9) For Pilate, Rome was the only kingdom. This was his truth.

Jesus' response in v. 34 is indirect and perhaps an appeal to Pilate's conscience. However, Jesus answered more directly in verses 36-37. The truth about Jesus is that He is a King, but His kingdom is not of this world. Pilate's answer can be interpreted as a search for the truth. *"Then you are a King."* Jesus gives Pilate the whole truth when he responds, "You say I am a king." He seems to say, congratulations, Pilate you have found the truth, but can you live it? Now that you have found the truth, what will you do with it? Jesus answered that His entire mission was to witness to the truth. All who are truth-seekers and hearers follow Jesus, the Truth.

The underlying issue at this trial was whether Pilate would accept Jesus as the Truth – the Son of God. In a sense, "Truth" was on trial and Pilate could not identify with who the Truth was, so he surrendered to the evil of his own deception. Pilate's response, "What is truth?" (v. 38) may well indicate that he never understood that Jesus is the Truth, or if he did, he chose to ignore it.

When compared with the first and second readings, the gospel shows that Jesus' presence and kingship are not found in the "clouds". Though He ascended into heaven, His presence is real. He is Emmanuel, God among us. He suffered and died for us. The truth about His redemptive act of love is that it creates tension within us, as we are challenged to follow the Truth of the kingdom of Christ, our King. Christ the King of the Universe, died, rose from the dead and will come again. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Did Jesus' life, death and resurrection reveal any truth about the Father's love for the world? What is it and how was it revealed?

PRAY ABOUT IT!

Monday

Read John 1: 17. Tell the truth. List five things that have power over your life.

Tuesday

Read John 14:6. Spend at least five minutes in silent prayer.

Wednesday

Read Psalm 104:1-4. Why must we bless the Lord?

Thursday

Make a donation to the St. Vincent De Paul food bank in thanksgiving for God's grace upon you.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist.

Pilate's Encounter with Jesus

Since the Jews could not execute a person without approval from the Roman authorities (John 18:31), the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate to pronounce the death sentence (Mark 14:64). Pilate seemed convinced that Jesus was not guilty of anything deserving death, and he sought to release Jesus (Matt 27:24; Mark 15:9-11; Luke 23:14; John 18:38-40; 19:12). Neither did he want to antagonize the Jews and run the risk of damaging his own reputation and career. Thus, when they insisted on Jesus' crucifixion, Pilate turned Jesus over to be executed (Matt 27:26; Mark 15:12-15; Luke 23:20-25; John 19:15-16).

Resources: King -from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers; Pilates' Encounter with Jesus - from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers; John- Neal M. Flanagan, O.S.M. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn. pp 1009-1011; Revelation – PHEME PERKINS, *The Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn. pp. 1270-1271. Truth-<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/cslewis141015.html#mLsD8LRrweFZfwHH.99>. Liturgy for Sundays and Solemnities 2018, Brian Schmisek, Diana Macalintal, Jay Cormier Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. pp 2546-259; Pope Francis; <https://sacfl.org/pope-francis-a-christians-life-should-point-to-truth/>

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Maria Goretti, St. Augustine, Blessed Sacrament- St. Joan of Arc St. Peter Claver Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2018