

Feast of Christ the King Sunday, November 22, 2015

1st Reading: Daniel 7:13-14 - *I saw one like a Son of man coming on the clouds.*

Responsorial Psalm 93 "The Lord is king; robed in majesty."

2nd Reading: Revelation 1:5-8 - *Christ has made us a kingdom of priests for his God & Father*

Gospel: John 18:33b-37 - *Everyone who belongs to thee truth listens to my voice.*

♪ The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices.

Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

He conquered sin and death; he truly is risen,
and he will share with us his heavenly vision. ♪

Today is the last Sunday of the Church year.

Next Sunday we will begin a new cycle of readings as Advent comes again.

What do we call this feast? It is the feast of CHRIST THE KING.

That is why I sang that song today.

Who is the King of Glory? What is he like? In the 1st two readings, he is like my friend, Lee the Lion [You can also see a lion with wings on the cover of your Gospel book – a symbol of the Gospel of Mark]



But if you look at the scene from the Gospel, Jesus doesn't seem to be much like a lion: This passage is part of the Passion according to the Gospel of John. Jesus is bloody, mocked and on trial before Pilate.

But who is really on trial? Jesus doesn't really answer Pilate's questions, and then he cross-examines *Pilate*. Jesus testifies to the truth, and becomes Pilate's judge.

That Gospel scene asks me a hard question: Who will I accept as my judge? It's a difficult question for me because I find it easy to put someone other than Jesus in the position of judge, and, even worse, I like to sit in the judge's chair myself. I like to sit in Jesus' chair!

And I like to have this in my hand! [remote control] because I like to be in control - but it's an illusion- it doesn't work!

Jesus is the one who shows me what *God* is really like. That's why we need to let him sit in **his** chair. He shows us that God judges with justice, with truth, with love, with compassion. And the Greek word for compassion the Gospel writers use is *rechem*, which literally means "*womb-love*" - the kind of love that comes from a mother; and we are all created from the womb of God.



And that vision of God has consequences. We are called and given the power to treat others the way God does.

Jesus not only shows me who God is, he shows me what it means to be a *child* of God. He calls himself the "Son of man" 79 times in the Gospels. That is a phrase taken from the book of Daniel, the first reading today. "I saw one *like a son of man* coming on the clouds of heaven..."

The Hebrew can also be translated, "I saw one *like a human being* coming with the clouds of heaven..." Jesus Christ is **the human one**, the one who shows us how to be fully human. I get upset when someone makes a mistake or hurts someone and says, "*I'm only human.*"

To sin is to fail to be really human. Pope John Paul used to say over and over again that Jesus is the one who is the ideal of a human being. When I am truly human, like Jesus is human, I know I am a child of God, and treat myself and others as children of God.

As we celebrate this feast of Christ the King, we will pray in the Our Father, "Thy kingdom come...." That's not so much about a place, it is more about the *reign* of God and of Christ. It's about who is my Lord, my judge, my savior. If we begin to let Jesus sit in the King's chair, and let him be the model for being human, the words of today's Mass will begin to come true.

There is a wonderful prayer in the Mass called the "preface." It's the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer. It's more like an overture to an opera than the preface of a book, it's the part that has all the important themes of the whole Eucharistic prayer & the particular feast in it. These are some of the words I will pray in your name today:

"As King, Christ claims dominion over all creation, that he may present to you, his almighty Father, an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace."

In the Gospel we meet a king who refuses to kill, even though he is about to be unjustly executed. I hear his words to Pilate like this, "If my kingdom were like yours, my followers would be fighting and killing your soldiers. But I will not allow my followers to kill in my name." We are challenged today to work to build a kingdom of truth and life, of justice, love and peace. We desperately need his vision today, in a world full of violence and retribution.

We are called to be fully who we are - disciples of Christ - fully human as he is "the human one" We are challenged To reject violence as a way of solving problems. To refuse to accept solutions based on fear.

In the Gospel we heard today, Jesus says, *"Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."* In the midst of the current debates about harboring refugees from war around the world, we need to listen to the voice of Jesus who also said, *"I was a stranger and you welcomed me "* All of us who claim to be followers of Christ and of the prophets of Israel before him need to hear God's words and live them:

In Rwanda, where millions were killed in a senseless wave of genocide in the 1990's, there is a memorial to the children who were killed. There are some words there placed over a photo of some of the children before they were slaughtered. They could apply today to the ones killed in Paris, as well as to the children who have died escaping from Syria,;

"If you had known me and if you had known yourself, you would never have killed me."

In spite of the state of the world today, the message of this feast is full of Gospel Hope:

We have a king who conquered death by dying and rising.

God's reign is more powerful than human schemes.

Christ will come again, & again, & again into our lives.

As we hear his word & receive communion today, He comes again into our midst and into our hearts to give us the grace to live his message of compassion:

I hear that message in another song: [Living Planet by Jay Mankita]

♪If all the world were peaceful now, and forevermore.

Peaceful at the surface and peaceful at the core.

Then all the joy within my heart would be so free to soar.

And] we're living on a living planet, circling a living star.

I don't know where we're goin', but I know we're goin' far.

AND WE CAN CHANGE THE UNIVERSE BY BEIN' WHO WE ARE ♪

