

Homily. Solemnity of Christ the King. Year. B. 23/24 November 2024.

Each year, on a weekend like this, about a month before Christmas, we honour Christ as our Universal King. We know that this celebration serves to mark the end of one year in our church, with a new year commencing the next weekend on the 1st Sunday of Advent. However, like most things in religions, there is more message and meaning to consider in this than first meets the eye.

Think first about what a strange King we are commemorating, one without any grand coronation ceremony in a Cathedral attended by royalty and the rich. Rather, our King is crowned with thorns crushed into his head as a criminal of the state, done at the behest of the powerful of his time by an uncaring, aloof Governor called Pontus Pilate. When this took place he was betrayed and mostly deserted by everyone. Think again about the leader we proclaim and follow, not welcomed to power by some great inauguration ceremony and happy parties, but instead a man put on trial for speaking the truth to power who for his trouble was greeted by jeers, insults and flogging. No throne, no Oval Office or Prime Ministers suite for our leader, only a barren cross of suffering and sacrifice, with the place of his death and glory being a dusty, lonely hill outside of the city walls.

If we face these facts then we start to better grasp just how radical, new, mind changing and earth shattering our King and his message really is, back then and right now. We come to understand that our year ends for us on a big bang, the effects of which ripple on through time and space to this day. For, if this is our King, our leader and the Christ we profess to follow, then the old world and its ways like the veil of the long gone

temple has been torn down through the middle. Nothing is hidden anymore and what is revealed is God's loving truth and for us the values that must matter most; justice, love, peace and the quest for holiness of living in God's grace. This is exactly what we're going to say and pray here that God will make so in the preface of our Eucharistic Prayer.

Before powerful Pilate and the angry crowd our leader and Lord said that he came to bear witness to the truth and that all who side with truth will listen to his voice. In reply, Pilate cynically said; Truth, what is truth, which sounds to me exactly like what we hear today in this fake news, post-truth world. But, counter to our present culture, we do listen because we know that there is truth, that truth is real and that only with it can we live as we are intended, fully and with dignity in loving caring service like our Lord.

This feast then tells us who we truly are; a group of radicals who hold values and beliefs despised and rejected by many, a people who live and relate differently to most these days and a community that seeks and respects the truth in a time of sham and pretence, having as our leader and King someone far greater than any who trod this earth. He is the eternal King, living, reigning and guiding us every day until his kingdom comes and the feast of joy is at last rightly celebrated in all of its fullness.