

## Faithful Witness for the Truth

We're almost there. Just a little bit more. One more week!

It's been twenty-eight weeks of "ordinary time" since the church celebrated Pentecost Sunday on May 20th— an entire half-year. Next Sunday, the church calendar pivots to a new liturgical year with the sacred season of Advent. So the church's year of the Lord, 2018, comes to an end this week. This Sunday is the last Sunday of the Church's liturgical year. Each year we set aside this Sunday to reflect upon a title we have given to Jesus. This feast day of "Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe" or commonly called Christ the King, may be particularly challenging to understand. While most of us do not have direct experience with kings or royalty, we have a sense of who they are. We know that royalty have sovereignty over their kingdoms. We know that those who are subjects to royalty offer them allegiance and honor. And we watched the royal weddings this year, and television shows like *The Crown*, and *Game of Thrones* or movies like *Black Panther*.

To understand how Christ is our king, we extend and magnify what we know to be true of the best of human royalty. As we

heard in today's readings, Christ's kingship extends to all places, all people, and all times. So, at the end of the liturgical year, we might take stock of all that has happened in our church, our world, our families, and in our own lives.

As this church year draws to a close, we gather all our days and nights, our lives with all their hopes and dreams and stand before our God, the Son of Man, a criminal of the Roman Empire, a prophet rejected by his own, Jesus Christ our Crucified King, who is the TRUTH. One day, all nations, people and languages will know the truth and stand before him in glory and his dominion will be everlasting. But while on earth, Jesus stood before the dominating powers of his day as a criminal, and he would be in the same place, I think, today. Jesus still stands in solidarity with the poorest, the least, those who never make it in the structures of society. Today we are confronted with a simple and difficult question: who do we belong to, who lays claim on us, who is our king? Do we stand with Jesus, with the Truth of God, and thereby with those Jesus stands with, or do we stand on the other side- the side that decides who lives and who dies, that uses violence and fear to manipulate reality, who decrees what is acceptable in society? Perhaps we waffle back and forth, sometimes in

collusion with the powers that be, and sometimes inching closer to Jesus' side? When we look back over this year of the Lord 2018, where were we to be found, which side were we on, and how did others know where we stood?

In the Gospel today we heard that Jesus' kingdom does not belong to this world in the sense that it operates or comes into being as kingdoms do in history. Jesus' reign is that of justice, of peace, of abundant life, of forgiveness, of mercy and love as God has loved us, of truth. Jesus is clear: '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.' This is the reason why we were born and why we are in this world too - to testify to the truth - to witness to the truth - and we do this by listening to and obeying the Word of Jesus, following that Divine Voice, standing with him and living in solidarity and communion with those he stands close to, lives with and dies with. We are protected by and live under the loving gaze and tender regard of the Truth of God, who is Christ Jesus.

As this church year is soon coming to a close, this week, take some time to look over this past year of your life. Would you be

ready to present this year and your life to God as service rendered, as a faithful witness to the truth by your solidarity with the least of our sisters and brothers, and as a gift to God in gratitude for all that has been given to you? Or would you like another year? A do-over perhaps? The Good News today is that we have that other year, the chance to make a “new year's resolution”, if you will, and decide today to really follow Christ the King - Cristo Rey -and resolve to stand with him in the face of distractions from the WAY he came to show us, attacks on the TRUTH he came to teach us, obstacles to the LIFE he came to give us.

One day there will be the fullness of peace, abiding justice and freedom and liberation - life in God for all! For now, we can stand in those corners and places in the world where God's reign has been planted and is blooming, sometimes like weeds, despite what might might be happening all around. We can make our stand, we can hope for divine life and we can link arms and hands with all those who listen to the Word steadfastly, believing that this new way of living, this revolution of love and peace exists now, here among us, and that our God stands with us in the power of the Spirit, in the presence of our Crucified and Risen

Lord. As followers of Cristo Rey/Christ the King, it is the only place we will stand and he is the only God we will worship, bow before and serve - in all our sisters and brothers. We are Jesus' kingdom, his presence and hope for the world, even now! We are God's delight and glory, even now! We belong to the Alpha and the Omega, to the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty. God is always coming towards us, even now! So, who will be a faithful witness to the TRUTH, who will serve Cristo Rey/Christ the King? Will it be YOU? Are you ready?

(\*homily inspired by writings on the feast by Megan McKenna)