

Homily for November 24-25th 2018
Feast of Christ the King
One Solitary Life

Al's parents were worried. They needed to visit their friends at the funeral home to offer their support to them at the time of their bereavement. But they had been unable to find a babysitter for five-year-old Al and his younger sister. So they decided to take the kids with them.

Before they left, Al's dad bent down close to him to explain what the expected behavior was for this solemn occasion. "Al," he said, "you're going to have to be just as good as you can this evening."

The four of them went to the funeral home. When they first arrived Al mimicked the sad behavior of the sad adults. But not for long. When Al's father looked around at one point, he observed his son standing in the middle of the room twirling his jacket above his head as if he were about to lasso someone with it. He knelt down by his son and whispered sternly: "Son I thought I told you to be just as good as you can be tonight."

Al tearfully replied, "But Daddy, I am."

And he was right. He was being as good as he could be.

This is an unfinished world and we are unfinished people. Even at our best we are not all that Christ intends for us to be.

It was at a time when people were far from as good as they could be that Pope Pius XI instituted the Solemnity of Christ the King in 1925. In the wake of the First World War, and as the storms were beginning to gather for the conflicts that would ultimately lead to the Second World War Pope Pius entered this day into the Liturgical calendar. It was with the rise of nationalism in Europe and all the unbelievable bloodshed and warfare that took place as a result of making the nation-state the highest moral authority, the highest power, that the Pope wanted to remind the people of Europe, and of the world, that at the end of the day Christ alone is the supreme king of the universe and that he is above every earthly authority, every earthly nation, and every earthly ruler.

Into this unfinished world has come the King. However, His kingship is not overt but covert in a world like this. It often works quietly, crossing borders the world over so that people of every nation and ethnicity declare He is King. Jesus never forces loyalty and allegiance. This is because his kingdom is one of invitation rather than intimidation, is governed by proclamation, not propaganda and desires not uniformity but conformity to the King of Kings. Jesus' intention is the transformation of our souls so that we will be fashioned into men and women who will be one day finished and made perfect as we enter into that realm where in the words of Revelation 11:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord

And of his Christ.

Pilate asks the question of Jesus “Are you the king of the Jews? To which the Lord responds:

Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?¹

What different kingdoms are represented by these two leaders. Pilate is the mouthpiece for the most powerful earthly kingdom the world to date had ever known. The Romans had fine-tuned the instruments of intimidation as their forms of torture, and capital punishment made plain to all. Here before the masters of intimidation – personified by Pontius Pilate, is Jesus, the master of invitation. He gets Pilate thinking. At no time does Jesus directly answer the governor’s question. Not in what I just quoted or later when St. John tells us:

³⁷ Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.²

Jesus is always inviting people to consider his kingship but never intimidating because his way is the way of proclamation and not propaganda. Propaganda is that form of communication that distorts information so as to create disinformation and lies to manipulate and control people. Proclamation is the form of communication stated in today’s Gospel:

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.”³

Jesus testifies to the truth about who God is, about who we are, about the meaning of our life, our death and destiny. Someone who testifies is a witness and promises to be honest. Propagandist on the other hand are purposefully dishonest because what they demand is uniformity to an ideology; whereas Jesus desires our conformity to a person – that is to become like him.

St John, not only penned the words of the today’s Gospel, he also wrote the Revelation while on the Island of Patmos. Why was he there? He dared to proclaim the truth about Jesus, and invite others to be conformed to King Jesus. The Roman Propaganda Machine couldn’t allow for his proclamation and sent him into exile to a rocky island quarry. From there heaven was opened to him and he saw:

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Jn 18:34). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Jn 18:37). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

³ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Jn 18:37). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

*Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*⁴

Rome's intimidation, propaganda and ideology couldn't silence King Jesus. This is because he is the Alpha and Omega and those who belong to Him, belong to the truth and His Kingdom can never be silenced, defeated or obliterated.

Consider the experience of one person who in meditating on King Jesus wrote:

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never traveled more than three hundred kilometres from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.... While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executors gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth — His coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.”

But compared to Jesus all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of men and women on this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.”⁵

Why is this so? Because billions through two thousand years have realized that into this unfinished world has come the King. Jesus lovingly enters into the lives of those who genuflect before Him to help us become, by His grace, the best we can be. What is asked of us? That we hear and respond to the invitation of his Truthful proclamation and give all of our life to be conformed to the King of Kings. To discover my life's meaning in relation to this One Solitary Life.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. (1993). (Re 1:5). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

⁵ <http://www.medjugorje.ie/files/one-solitary-life.pdf>