

## ***The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ The King***

A woman on pilgrimage in the Holy Land visited the village of Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle changing water into wine. The gift shop sold fine vintage wine, which they claim is the best you've ever tasted.

The woman bought several bottles to bring home. At the airport, she forgot to put the bottles into her checked luggage. She quickly labeled each of the bottles "Water." At security, her bag was opened and they said, "What are these?" She calmly responded, "They are just water."

The officer said, "We're going to have to open one to check." He opened a bottle and poured some out and of course, it was the fine vintage from Cana. "Ma'am," he said. "This isn't water. It is wine."

Without missing a beat, the woman threw her arms in the air and cried out, "Hallelujah, Lord, you've done it again!" after which the officer waived her through.

Today, we celebrate the final Sunday of the Church year. Hallelujah, Lord, you've done it again! You have guided us, once again, to through our yearly pilgrimage of faith through Your birth, death, resurrection, teachings and miracles, and now we come to the last act.

As we again prepare to go back to the beginning of this great story, we end on a high note. It is for this reason that the Solemnity of Christ the King was chosen for this final Sunday of our Church year. We liturgically ascend to the Throne where Christ reigns as King today.

As we hear in our Gospel today, Pontius Pilate viewed the claims of Christ's kingship with suspicion. If Christ was claiming to be a king in a political sense, then He would represent a threat to Pilate's own position and the empire he was there to defend.

Notice that the question uppermost in his mind was not "Are you the Messiah of the Jews?" but "Are you the king of the Jews?" If the answer was yes, then the Roman Empire would have a threat on its hands and Pilate and Jesus would find themselves on a collision course.

The answer that Jesus gives is a relief to Pilate. He says, "My kingdom does not belong to this world." Jesus tells Pilate that His Kingdom does not consist of kings and queens, of armies and wars, of territories and conquest.

His Kingdom is made up of something entirely different – it is made up of the Truth. It is made up of something that cannot be won, purchased or conquered.

Moreover, His kingship cannot be stripped away even as He is stripped and beaten because He is the very Truth of that Kingdom.

Christ is saying to Pilate and to us, “I am the Truth from my Father – I am my Father's revelation of Himself. I am my Father's Word. My Father is speaking to the world through me.”

This must have been an amazing thing for Pilate to hear; and it should be something amazing for us to hear as well.

What Jesus said to Pilate does not end with His statement. In fact, it ends with a challenge, when He said, “Everyone who belongs to the Truth listens to my voice.”

Would Pilate listen? Do we? What Pilate did at the end of the day was to wash his hands of Him. We, too, can be tempted to wash our hands of what Christ asks of us.

But, today's feast reminds us that we belong to Christ our King; that we are all called to belong to the Truth and to listen to His voice.

This is how Christ is meant to be our King – by ruling our hearts and our lives with His Love.

There are many voices in our modern world competing for our allegiance:

- The call to excessive materialism and consumerism;
- The call to a self-sufficiency that convinces us we can do it all on our own with no need for God.
- The daily calls in our lives that cause us to be so busy that we forget to make time for God.
- There is no shortage of calls in the world.

In the midst of all of this, Christ is calling too. He is calling us to the counter-cultural Truth:

- That we are meant to love radically – both our neighbors and even our enemies;
- That we are meant to reach out to the needy, the homeless, the addict, and those on the margins.
- He is calling us to transform our broken world into His Kingdom of love and peace and holiness.

As our Church year ends on this high note:

- Let us raise our praise and thanks to Christ our King;
- Let us abandon all other false kings that demand our loyalty;
- Let us listen to the voice of the One who saves us and
- Let us dwell in His abiding and unchanging Truth and Love.

“Everyone who belongs to the Truth, listens to His voice.”

Praise Be Jesus Christ the King, Now and Forever, Amen!