

Today is the feast of Christ the King, the feast of our parish and I would like to wish each and every one of you, "Happy Feast." We sang the responsorial psalm, The Lord is King, robed in Majesty." I don't know if I agree with that sentiment.

Jesus is enthroned on the Cross, as King. I would like to invite to look closely at the cross for a moment... Jesus dressed in royal clothes, with a crown on his head, is transfixed on the cross. Different people have different takes on this cross. Some have complained to me. For me personally, it is a very powerful reminder of what sort of a King Jesus became.

In the sequence of events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, it seemed that nothing went right in the divine tragedy played out that day. But finally as the sequence of events which ended in Jesus' death came to its conclusion, there was one thing that Pilate did get right: That was the message which he posted on top of the cross. In three languages it read, "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews." Pilate may have written this sign to ridicule the Jewish leaders but in doing so he made a bold statement. Without knowing it Pilate told all who were present at the crucifixion that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

So let us focus on Jesus who is the King transfixed on the cross. To a rhetorical question, "Then you are king?" Jesus responded, "You say I am a King. 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 me."

Jesus defines his Kingship and governance in terms of truth as well as he defines discipleship or our membership in his Kingdom in terms of belonging to the truth. This is the central message of the Gospel. To witness to the truth or belong to the truth!

As I reflect on this Gospel passage on the feast of Christ the King, it seems to me that one of the most urgent tasks facing the Church is forging a robust but gracious, urgent but respectful relationship to the Truth.

If Jesus came to testify to the truth, if he *is* the truth, if he is the *King* of truth, then what do we, his subjects, owe our king? What does loyalty to the King of truth look like, here and now?

Well, if Truth is king, then "fake news" is not. If Truth is king, then self-deception (however expedient or attractive) is not. If Truth is king, then distorting inconvenient facts for our own political, racial, social, cultural, religious, or economic comfort, is *not*.

If you do some Google searches, for recent headlines featuring the word "truth," here are some of the lines that pop up most often: "The Death of Truth." "The Assault on Truth." "Notes on Falsehood." "Our Post-Truth World."

Though the articles focused (unsurprisingly) on contemporary American politics, their concerns reached beyond the political to a more sinister and existential reality: we live in an Age of Untruth. We are steeped in a culture of blatant lies, sly exaggerations, doctored images, wild conspiracy theories, and fake news. Objective facts, for all intents and purposes, no longer exist or matter. The true is false, the false is true, and anything can mean anything. We have a mission to do.

At the turn of the century in London there were errand boys who apparently as they went about their work were whistling. They were whistling tunes. But the tunes that they were whistling were out of tune just ever so slightly. And it wasn't just one errand boy, but all of the errand boys all seemed to be whistling out of tune. And some research was done and what they discovered was that the bells of Westminster were also slightly out of tune. When we live in an environment where truth does not matter, objective facts are distorted, then we accept that as normal. We have a mission to do- to rebuild truth.

In Germany, after the Second World War, the authors of what was called *Trümmerliteratur*, or “rubble literature,” felt the need to rebuild their language, poisoned by Nazism, as well as their country, which lay in ruins. They understood that reality, truth, needed to be reconstructed from the ground up, with new language, just as the bombed cities needed to be rebuilt. I think we can learn from their example. We stand once again, though for different reasons, in the midst of the rubble of the truth. And it is for us people of faith whether we are writers, thinkers, journalists, philosophers, doctors, priests —to undertake the task of rebuilding a society that respects truth at all levels.

Dear friends, Jesus came to witness to the truth. He is truth. He is the King of truth. We owe it to him, we owe to our faith to be champions of truth.