

24. November 2024

Solemnity of Christ the King
My Kingdom is not of this world

Jn 18:33-37

'Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. As it is, my kingdom does not belong here.' Pilate said, 'So, then you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

As Christians, we recognise the Lord as King; a King after our own heart. The more we come to know the Lord, the more we are filled with joy that He is as He is. A King without shadows; a King who gives us His heart and we give Him ours.

Pilate did not know how to deal with the situation. He realised that something was wrong with the accusation against Jesus, because he had been handed over to them out of envy (cf. Mt 27:18). Moreover, he probably sensed that the Lord was radiating something that he could not explain... Added to this came the warnings of his wife, who had dreamt about Jesus and was now begging Pilate not to meddle with this righteous man (cf. Mt 27:19).

But Pilate, who had initially tried to set Him free, did not follow these clear indications, out of human respect, out of fear of the Jews and apparently also out of fear of losing his power.

Human respects and fear of losing power do not allow us to listen to the voice of truth, which is Jesus Himself, whose Kingdom is not of this world. It is a Kingdom of love and truth, in which only those can enter and remain who strive to correspond to the conditions of this Kingdom; those who do not remain self-absorbed in their egoism.

Of great importance to us is this statement of the Lord: "*All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.*" Not that we should interpret it as giving us the right to meet other people in a false self-confidence, as if we were "masters of the truth" because we follow the Lord. Rather, this statement shows us that it is not just about knowing and recognising the Lord; it is about abiding in Him and having our whole being permeated by Him.

This is what distinguishes the Reign of Christ: the conversion of hearts, which results in this Kingdom of love and truth arising among men, because Jesus Himself dwells and rules in their hearts.

We know that the priests and kings of this Kingdom are those who sincerely strive for a life of holiness. Thus, it is clear that the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, for, if it were, it would be conquered by the power of arms. But no, the Kingdom of God is not conquered in this way!

The Lord tells Pilate that he was born to bear witness to the truth. We, who have been born again in baptism, must also understand these words as a task entrusted to us. As "newborns" or "born again in the Spirit of God", we have the mission to bear witness to the truth; that is, to this King and His Kingdom.

Just as Jesus bears witness to the Father, we too are to bear witness to the love of the Holy Trinity by our lives. But it is not up to us who listens to our voice and who does not, because we are only co-workers of the truth and not its owners. But may He who is the Truth Himself assist us to bear witness to it in word and life, and not to falter in it, so that other people - who are also of the truth - will hear His voice and follow Him.