

Readings Daniel 7: 13-14; Apocalypse 1: 5-8; John 18: 33-37



Fr Michael says:

Basic questions of life and its meaning and direction face us. Is Jesus our King in reality, looking at our lives? His coming is foretold in Daniel and He will indeed reign 'till the end of time, as Revelations tells us and of which Pilate is made well aware!

We might think that idolatry is something past – it is not! We have only to think back to 2008 and the financial crash that took place with its fallout: the desire for money and wealth is the root of all evil, the Scriptures tell us, how right they were there! It can all lead to us leading a superficial life and forgetting God as our ultimate destiny, our source of life. People can seek to become celebrities, leaders, “the cult of personalities” as the Communists said.

The ultimate destiny of all these people can be seen in a very moving picture during the Ukraine Revolution. It shows a group of ordinary people quietly standing around an impromptu altar on which there is an image of Christ: long obscured and now revealed in His humble glory again! What a contrast between the way of life He offered and the one that the people had seen ‘till recently: fear versus love, orders versus invitations; oppression and death versus freedom and life. No wonder the ordinary people gathered around Jesus who gave so much to us and indeed the gift of His life too!

The Gospel presents Jesus before Pilate: power versus love once more; despite his vulnerability He is in control! Political power of coercion resides in the position, many people have shown the danger of the system by what they were doing, wisdom and goodness are often missing. However, when we look at the opposite, we see that the power resides in a person and not the position. They too might be rich but very often the opposite is true, they are poor and lacking such power as the leaders had.

We need to distinguish between authority and obedience on the one hand and power and control on the other. Some in the first group very often are without power. The influential have no need to control those over whom they have influence. So it is with Jesus and Pilate. Jesus shows us who God is, through the life that he leads and the actions he carries out – all this to encourage us to put Him in the centre of our lives. He is far from being remote and distant, because through His closeness He shows us how much He loves us and shows how precious and important each of us is to Him.

Let us savour these words: ‘Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world’ He does not rule as earthly kings rule: He has no palace, throne, crown or army. You give Him an allegiance and a loyalty, not given to any institution. Alone and unarmed He faced Pilate, who had thousands at his command – Jesus had nobody – yet He was incomparably the greater of the two. Jesus is the hope of the human race; He rules not by force, but by love. Lord Jesus may your Kingdom come and may you remember me on that day.