

Homily Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe - Year B 2021

Some films begin midway through a story. As the film progresses the history of what happened leading up to current events are revealed a little at a time. In the process your understanding of the story changes sometimes quite radically. Today we enter a story at the point when Jesus Christ claims to be a King. Our readings take us to the trial of Jesus in the final stages of his life as he stands before Pilot. Note that the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus for blasphemy. Because the Romans would not have put Jesus to death for this, they told the Romans Jesus claimed to be King, an act of treason against the empire. Jesus was not born into royal privilege. Jesus was born while his parents were travelling and because someone's kindness allowed Mary and Joseph to use a stable heated by the animals. Strangers were the only people to welcome him, some being foreigners bearing gifts. He immediately became a refugee, rather appropriate as so many seek refuge today. He went to a foreign land that welcomed him. Eventually returning to his home town, he lived among the people and grew in understanding of himself, his family and the joys and difficulties of the lives of those around him; and the importance and place of God in his life.

In his ministry Jesus never shirked the challenges of life, faced up to difficulty, tragedy, misjudgement, abuse, cruelty, all kinds of suffering and used them for the good of others. Most importantly dying to win life for us.

Avery Dulles sj wrote: Jesus enables us to believe that human life, with all its contradictions, is the place where God is pre-eminently found. Unlike every other mythology, the myth of the Incarnation gives us strength to face up to the harsh realities of our fragmented world, to feel and to transmit the touch of God's reconciling love. The Incarnation does not provide us with a ladder by which to escape from the ambiguities of this life and scale the heights of heaven. Rather it enables us to burrow deep into the heart of the planet earth and find it shimmering with divinity.

As King, Jesus does not stand aloof or distanced from us. He is a shepherd, a servant, a light, a healer, a peace maker, a reconciler. One who challenges as well as inspires, motivates and encourages. Of all people, Jesus is the one who believes in us the most, knowing we are capable of great things. This is why, through Pope Francis, Jesus has asked us to come together in a synodal process to speak and listen to each other as we talk about our journey of faith with our fellow pilgrims. In the listening we will become more aware of how God is present in every moment and every encounter, in the wonder of nature, in the air we breathe. As we share and as we listen, we will grow the Church together to the greater honour and glory of Christ, King of the Universe.

The Priest was preparing a man for his final days on earth

Whispering firmly, the Priest said, "Denounce the devil! Let him know how little you think of him!" The dying man said nothing. The priest repeated his order. Still the man said nothing. The priest asked, "Why do you refuse to denounce the devil and his evil?" The dying man said, "Until I know for sure where I'm heading, I don't think I ought to aggravate anybody."