

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 20, 2022

Reflection by Sister Judith Murphy, OSB – Prioress

2 Sm 5:1-3; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43

This Sunday brings us to the end of the Liturgical Year, the cycle of readings and feasts and prayers that through the life of Jesus, and Salvation History, and the life of faith. Next Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent begins the Church year anew. The readings selected for today are very much about acknowledging and celebrating that Jesus is our King—kings and kingship are not familiar to us who live with democracy, such as it is. Was it Churchill who said, Democracy is the least efficient form of government in the world, ...except for everything else.

The gospel reading today is the vivid and familiar scene of the conversation between Pilate and Jesus, that we are accustomed to hearing in Holy Week, when Jesus is on the way to his crucifixion:

Are you the king?... My kingdom is not here... Then you are a king?

For this I was born; for this I came into the world: to testify to the **truth**.

What kind of a king is born in a stable ...and reaches his glory on the cross of Calvary? Can such a king help us sort out the terrible and frightening stuff of world news: wars, hatred, racism? Trying to comprehend the challenges to human life that are the headlines in our world and city today can tempt us to despair.

What is the truth Jesus testifies to?

Speaking of God triumphing over evil, truth over falsehood, Dr. Martin Marty is quick to point out that God's triumph, the triumph of good over evil is only in the end times. Even though the present times may not be the end times, in faith we reach out in trust to celebrate Jesus Christ as the triumphant King. The teaching of Jesus calls us to love. *We were reminded last week that it would be good to remember to live this day and this hour as if it were our last.*

Just about as earth shaking as the description of the end times, we have Pope Francis' earth-shaking entry onto the world stage. He who touches the hearts of so many ---not just Catholics--- with the excitement of a call to conversion, even talking about sin. And he announced that the Church is to have a Year of Mercy – beginning this December 8 and running to next November 30. What hope has entered into the hearts of so many with this Pope!

In announcing the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis cited the story in Luke of the woman who went to wash Jesus' feet. She was known to be a sinner, and she had unshakeable certainty --given by Jesus,-- of being forgiven. It is that certainty we are asked by the Pope to embrace in this Year of Mercy. We pray that we may be a church that is a place where everyone feels welcome; that we as the Church may be the Face of the Father's Mercy to the broken and the weary among us—a truly earth shattering message.

John Duns Scotus, a disciple of St. Francis, said that Christ is the very first idea in the mind of God, given to humanity to see how to live humanly... and Jesus' teaching is overwhelmingly to love. Love and forgiveness go together
We come to this banquet together to receive food for the journey. We come to dare to say, Our Father. We come to pray that we may live in faith, hope, and love---each day. We come to pray toward the fulfillment of human history, with the cry: **Come, Lord Jesus!**