



Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe 24 November 2024 **Reflection by Mgr Daniel McHugh**

“All who are on the side of truth listen to my voice” (John 18)

An inspiring story this week was “Living with a Brain Tumour” a BBC documentary of BBC Scotland’s Glen Campbell who faces his own mortality and considers what matters most in his life. I was struck by his words “I want to get the most out of each day”: he has committed himself to raising awareness of this illness as he enjoys climbing Scotland’s mountains and aims to gradually return to his work covering politics in Scotland.

I feel the story relates to the Gospel of yesterday’s Mass (Wednesday 20 November) the Parable of the Talents which is about being faithful stewards of the gifts we have been given by God: Fr Patrick van der Vorst has a daily reflection on the Gospel illustrated by art; yesterday his picture was of a stained glass window depicting the man of noble birth handing out talents to his servants as he went abroad in the Church of St Bega, Bassenthwaite, Lake District. The third servant, out of fear, hides his gift rather than using it. Van der Vorst says *“the parable challenges us not to let fear govern our relationship with the Lord, for love should be the driving force. As the First Letter of St John reminds us, ‘Perfect love drives out fear’. Because we have been loved by God, we are called to love in return, which means putting our God-given gifts to work in the service of the Lord and his people. Each day presents an opportunity for us to do so: a service rooted in love, not hindered by fear.”*

In The Solemnity of Christ the King the Church reminds us that we are part of the Kingdom in which Christ is our Lord, that his Way laid out in the Gospels and passed on by the Church, is what we have committed to and are called to renew.

Ferlita writes in the ‘Paths of Life’: *“The image of Christ the King is the image of Christ risen, to whom dominion, power and glory belong, who rules by love and only by love.”* In the reading from the Prophet Daniel for Christ the King we have these words:

“Nations and peoples of every language serve him; his dominion in an everlasting dominion that shall not be destroyed.” (Dan 7:14)

“Are you a king then?” Pilate asked Jesus. Not in the sense that Pilate understood, but the one appointed by the Father to rule over all creation. Jesus says, *“For this I was born and*

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for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.” The truth is: it is God’s design to deliver us from the dominion of the world and to transfer us “to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col 1:13). His kingdom is not of this world, he said, and yet it exists along with it, like the wheat and the weeds. This is the newness of it. Ferlita writes “In Jewish thought the future world was to come after the consummation of the world. But Christ’s kingdom is already in our midst. Christ has overcome the world, Christ has risen, and by Baptism we live the life of his Spirit. His mission becomes our mission, we are in the world, but not of it, and we overcome it by “our faith” (1 John 5:4)

The Loyola Press Commentary says “He was not the King Pilate feared he might be....Jesus prayed for his disciples (CF John 17 the Last Supper) who are in the world but do not belong to the world. Yet, like Jesus, they are sent into the world for the world’s salvation....In John’s language, the world prefers the darkness, and yet the light will not overcome the darkness.....Jesus’ kingship was hidden from many of his contemporaries. Only those chosen, who have the eyes of faith, are able to see. As modern disciples of Jesus, we also struggle at times to recognise Jesus as King. Today’s Gospel invites us to see with eyes of faith that we might recognise that Jesus, through his crucifixion and death, is indeed king and saviour of all.”

Fr Joseph Pollard in “Finding Fresh Light” concludes his reflection for Christ the King by quoting Carlo Carretto in ‘Summoned by love’: “All the loves that we discover and experience one by one in the course of existence....are only partial stages preparing.... That total, holy love which is the fulfilment of all loves: love of God, which will be our heritage for ever, the devouring fire of our paradise. Then we shall understand why we were born, why God has summoned us into existence.”

What a talent we have been given in the gift of Faith in Jesus: it is a gift we cannot hide, a gift to celebrate with love on the Solemnity of Christ the King.

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