

## **Our Lord, Jesus Christ, King of the Universe**

**Dan. 7: 13-14; Ps. 93; Rev. 1: 5-8, 18; Jn. 18: 33b-37**

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea when Jesus entered Jerusalem to the 'hosannas' of the people. As with many other rulers of his day, he likely had risen to his position by the use of power politics, manipulation and even violence. Jesus was accused of calling Himself the King of the Jews so Pilate, presiding over His trial, asked Him whether He was a king. After initially avoiding the question, Jesus told Pilate that he was a king but that His kingdom was 'not from this world'.

All of us are familiar with various kings, queens, presidents and other leaders in the world. Many of these leaders are compassionate and truly care about the people entrusted to their care. But some rulers are tyrants, maintaining their positions of authority by corruption, manipulation, and violence. They ruthlessly crush opposition. In recent history, we think of rulers such as: Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, Saddam Hussein, Fidel Castro, Idi Amin, Ferdinand Marcos and so on. Even Donald Trump, who was freely elected in the greatest democracy on earth, saw himself as an absolute ruler who employed lies and corruption and, who many have said, incited violence to try to maintain his hold on power.

Pilate encountered Jesus having come from a background of witnessing and interacting with tyrannical rulers. With his previous experience, he was not equipped to understand what Jesus was telling him. He feared that Jesus would employ the tools used by worldly leaders to overthrow him and assume the leadership of Israel. The reading from the Book of Daniel would have increased his fears. The prophet described a king, descending from heaven, who would establish a kingdom that would last forever.

Jesus said that His kingdom was 'not from this world'. But notice that He did not say that His kingdom was not in this world. Jesus' kingdom does not exist somewhere 'up in heaven' far away from us. Jesus' kingdom exists here on earth in the hearts of those who have faith in Him. But unlike earthly kingdoms, Jesus established His kingdom and maintains it not through the use of force and manipulation but through love and truth. Jesus said that he came to testify to the truth and that everyone who belongs to the truth listens to Him.

We are Jesus' subjects who He holds not by force and coercion but by love and truth. We are happy to listen to Him and to follow His commandments to love God and love our neighbour. We believe that Jesus is 'the ruler of the kings of the earth'; that He is 'the Alpha and the Omega (the first and the last), who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty' as we read in the Book of Revelation. There is no one greater.

Jesus' kingdom has been founded and maintained on love. When we see Jesus on the Cross, He shows us the ultimate expression of love. Jesus extends His arms to invite each of us to come to Him and to serve Him.

As we come to the end of another liturgical year in the Church and in our own spiritual lives, we would do well to reflect on how we have served Jesus by keeping His commandment to love and serve God and neighbour. Let us submit ourselves, without fear, to His most gentle and loving Kingship and continue to serve Him through our love for one another. Let us continue to serve Jesus faithfully in His kingdom on earth, so that we may enjoy everlasting life with Him in heaven.