

In searching, we take on the characteristics of the One we seek

The Solemnity of Christ the King – Year B

Dn 7:13-14 , Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5, Rv 1:5-8, Jn 18:33b-37



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11/21/2021

Good morning. This is the last Sunday in our liturgical year and we celebrate today the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ the King. A kingdom, as we hear in the Gospel, "...not of this earth." I want to take a moment with the theme of our first two readings as background for the Gospel.

For the Prophet Daniel, visions and dreams were part of divine revelation. In scripture, the image of clouds signifies something or someone as being from heaven. The term that we heard this morning, 'son of man' was in common use at the time. The Aramaic translation is literally '*son of a weak man.*' Daniel sees one like 'the son of man' coming on the clouds. This mysterious figure receives from God, the Ancient One, dominion, glory and kingship; all peoples, nations, and languages will serve him. Daniel 7:14

The Book of Revelation draws from the Old Testament books especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Our second reading from Revelation may well have been intended as the fulfillment of Daniel's dream. Again, we have the image of a figure in the clouds. The author identifies this person as Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Our reading ends, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is and who was and who is to come." Revelation 1:8

The Alpha and Omega refer to a truth without beginning or end. The Trinity is that unchanging truth. As we immerse ourselves in prayer and the complexities of life that make up our spiritual journey, we take on the characteristics of the One we seek. We touch a timeless truth beyond ourselves. The love and compassion of Jesus are reflections of God's sacred character. The care and attention that Jesus offers to the poor and marginalized are an intimate extension of God's love for our humanity. Spiritual intimacy with God gives

Jesus and us the authority to speak truth to power. It is that authority that unsettled the Jewish community. Jewish law provided control and power over every aspect of life. The parables of Jesus cut through the law pointing to the timeless compassion and mercy of God. Someone in the crowd asks what they are all thinking, “Where did this man acquire this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is this not the carpenter’s son?” Matthew 13:53 Yes, this is the carpenter’s son who, in the depth of his prayer, has taken on the character of the One in whom he abides.

The thought of losing control and power provoked the chief priests. Jesus tries to assure them. “Do not presume that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:13 In scripture we hear repeated challenges to the authority of Jesus. What Jesus asked seemed too hard, too much; a challenge and threat to the power structure of the time. For this reason, rumors were circulated that he posed a threat to Roman rule as well.

This brings us to the Gospel and the appearance before Pilate, who asks, “Are you the King of the Jews?” There is a discussion of kingdoms and Pilate never quite grasps the notion of a heavenly kingdom beyond his power and control. Jesus ends the passage saying, “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” John 18:37 Pilate seemed more concerned with power than truth.

Speaking truth to power is hard even when that truth is from God. It challenges and threatens those in control. It is disruptive to tradition and cherished belief. The consequence of speaking truth to power is the body of a protestor shot down on our streets and the body of our Lord hanging from a cross.

So, before Pilate, Jesus denies being a King and yet we celebrate the solemnity of Jesus Christ the King. Jesus did not seek to be a king. He did not ask to be adored. He only asks that we abide in him; that we share life with him. His Spirit permeates the universe and, by extension his, kingdom. Abide in me and I will show you a life that will unlock the mysteries of the universe. He came to testify that the creation in which we find ourselves holds a sacred, knowable truth. Through our relationships and the prayers of a lifetime, we find our way to that truth by listening for His voice. In searching, we take on the characteristics of the One we seek. Our compassion gives way to love and humble service. We begin to see as God sees. When we look at the earth from the International Space Station, we do not see political boundaries, cultures and kingdoms. These are lines in the sand, drawn by us, not God. May we let Christ's Holy Spirit guide us beyond our thirst for dominance and power.

The Synod on Synodality that is underway represents the possibility of change within the church. Following tradition is easy because it does not require a lot of reflection. Change can be hard. The hope of this Synod is an ongoing process of attentive listening and reflection. The image that speaks to me is walking Lake Superior listening for the sound of the waves against the shore. The waves will gently shape and contour the shoreline as the Holy Spirit will shape and guide our Church.

In searching, we take on the characteristics of the One we seek. Our Eucharist unites us with one another in this community and with all who seek the truth. Like all sacraments, Eucharist is a sign that God is with us.

And so, we gather to celebrate that. Amen.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB, 1987.

I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org. n.d.