

November 22, 2020 An Exemplary Royal Homily: Recently, in a sermon I delivered to our schoolchildren, I made a reference to one of the unforgettable characters from Lewis Carroll's *"Alice in Wonderland"*: The Red Queen of Hearts. This hot-tempered woman was in the habit of ordering executions. One of her famous lines, was the oft-repeated quote, "Off with her head" directed at young Alice. At the tea party hosted by the Mad Hatter, the Red Queen weighed in on the subject of truth. She declared, "Truth is what I want it to be." She alone determined what was true. Her words were arrogant and willful, admitting of no ultimate authority.

In the Old Testament the kings of Israel and Judah very often were unfaithful to the precepts of the covenant and failed in their duties. The kings and queens of the Christian era were also remarkably delinquent in their duties and failed to set a good example for their subjects. Very few members of Catholic royalty have been declared saints by the Church.

The word "Christ" is the Greek translation of the word "Messiah", meaning "the Anointed One", "the King". By calling ourselves Christian we label ourselves as followers of the King, who we recognize as Jesus.

When did Jesus first proclaim himself a king? Answer: When he appeared before Pontius Pilate.

"Pilate said to him "So you are a king?" Jesus answered: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice". (Jn. 18:37)

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38) One answer may be the witness of His life of selfless generosity. Jesus reveals that He is love.

Jesus is the truth from which all truth comes. He does not teach truth; He is truth!

Today, there are numerous forces active in hoping to overthrow Christ's kingship. So often we hear echoes of Pilate's cynicism: "What is truth?", "All religions are bogus!", "No one religious faith is superior to another.", "Truth is relative.", "Truth is subjective."

We hear echoes of the mob who cried out "We have no king but Caesar" on the morning of Christ's death on the cross. People of faith are persecuted and Christ is removed, often forcibly, from the public square.

In ancient times, the royal dignity of Christ was expressed, especially by representing Him seated on the imperial throne, glorious and clothed in purple, which was the color worn by emperors.

In today's epistle, Saint Paul insists that "Christ must reign" in our hearts, minds and bodies. "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet, the last enemy is death." (1 Cor. 15:4) Paul was undoubtedly inspired by the 110th Psalm, which reads, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool". This Psalm was read aloud at a service for the enthronement of a king. It depicts a ruler who is seated on a throne, using the heads of vanquished enemies under his feet.

Who do I want to follow? The Truth, or falsehood? God, or the Evil One?

In one of his sermons for the feast of Christ the King, Monsignor Ronald Knox said, "Christ will reign in the world only where, only in so far as, he rules in human hearts".

At the end of our days, let us hope to hear the words of Christ spoken in today's parable of the Last Judgment: "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". (Mt. 25:34)

Amen!