
22 SUNDAY

FEAST of CHRIST THE KING
34th Sunday of the Year

Daniel 7: 13-14
Ps 92: 1,2,5
Apocalypse 1: 5-8
John 18: 33-37

It isn't always shown in depictions of the crucifixion, but there was an inscription attached to the cross on which Jesus died. It proclaimed "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". That inscription was written by the Roman governor, Pilate, as a kind of justification for his allowing Jesus to be put to death. For Pilate was very conscious of power and authority, and had questioned Jesus rather closely about the "king" title he'd heard being used about Him. Jesus seemed reluctant to acknowledge that title or discuss it, and only after Pilate pressed Him more insistently did Jesus accept the title. He then went on to make clear that His kingship and His kingdom were very different realities from what Pilate was thinking.

Today's world mostly doesn't like the notion of kings and kingdoms. So when we celebrate Christ the King we should be careful not to misunderstand what the Feast means. It's not about power, domination or control, even if we've sometimes acted as if it were. We may at times have given our contemporaries just such a misunderstanding. Let us take care to be sensitive both to modern prejudices and to what Jesus was really talking about. He was born into this world to be the "faithful witness", witness to the truth, and for that He died. He is "the Alpha and the Omega... who is, who was, and who is to come", the truth of God's faithful love for His world. That was something Pilate could not understand, even though he insisted on the controversial wording he'd written for that death-sentence inscription.

"Glory and power for ever to the Lamb who was slain".

Text wordcount: 277