

Thirty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B
The Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ the King
November 22, 2009

Readings: Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:5-8; John 18:33b-37

What is Truth?

Our gospel story this morning takes place just before Jesus is scourged and crucified. Jesus is being interrogated by Pilate and He says: *“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.”* These are the last two lines of this morning’s reading from the Gospel of John. Do you remember the next line from John’s gospel? It’s a pretty famous line. *“Pilate said to him, ‘What is truth?’”*

Pilate asks a very important question: *what is truth?* If we don’t ask the question and search for the answer we won’t find it. Jesus gives us one answer; He says: *“I am the way and the truth and the life.”* (John 14:6) The Jewish leaders didn’t recognize Jesus as the truth. They didn’t recognize Him as their King and Messiah. They were looking for an earthly king and were blinded to the truth.

Sometimes we don’t find the truth because we don’t even look for it. Other times we look for the truth in life, but when we find it, we ignore it because it is inconvenient or it does not match with what we expected. Jesus is the King of Truth, but Satan, the prince of lies, prowls about the earth seeking the ruin of our souls. He tries to distract us and deceive us so that we cannot find Jesus or so we take our eyes off of Him. We here have all found Jesus, but we need to stay focused on Him so we are not distracted and led astray from the truth He teaches us.

And one of the biggest lies of Satan working in our world today is moral relativism—the idea that there is no such thing as absolute truth; that we can all decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong. It’s a very appealing lie and there’s no wonder why our society has grabbed hold of it so strongly. It allows us to simply rationalize and decide what we want to do, and not work to find the truth about what we should do. It allows us to justify enjoyment of temporary earthly pleasures, but blinds us from looking for the eternal happiness promised by God. We get so distracted that we lose sight of the straight path; we miss the narrow gate.

So we need to reflect on whether we seek the truth about what we ought to do, or do we sometimes find it more convenient to remain ignorant of the truth. Being pro-choice is an example of this convenient ignorance. People who are pro-choice don’t try to find the truth about abortion; they claim that everyone should be free to make up their own minds and decide for themselves. But if we look for the truth we can ask the question: *Is the fetus in its mother’s womb a human person or not a human person?* This is a yes or no question. There is only one answer. And if we seek the truth and determine that the answer is yes, as the Church has taught for 2000 years, then the logical conclusion is that killing that fetus is murder. But how many do we know fail to look for the answer and do not try to determine the truth? By not looking for the truth they can stay ignorant and can continue to support political candidates that support murder and call it an acceptable choice.

The abortion issue is a very clear and obvious example of how Satan is at work encouraging us to avoid the truth. There are others, such as contraception or embryonic stem cell research, where we hide from the truth to justify our actions. But there are countless other ways as well. We all have blind spots that keep us from seeing the truth. And we are all different and all have different blind spots. And of course, it's much easier to recognize the blind spots of others than it is our own.

Do we stay blind to the poor around the world and in our own community so that we can ignore our duty to share our blessings? Or do we look to the truth that Jesus taught us a couple of weeks ago in the story of the poor widow who gave from her need and not just from her excess?

Do we sometimes obsess with storing up treasures on earth and forget the truth of Jesus' promise of eternal riches in heaven?

We can go on and on. We can look at the absolute truths God teaches us in the commandments: *thou shalt not lie, steal, kill, or commit adultery and shall keep holy the Sabbath*. We can look at the truths Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount in the Beatitudes: *blessed are the poor, the peacemakers, those who mourn, those who are meek, those who show mercy, those who fight for justice, those who are clean of heart, those who suffer persecution for His sake*. We can look for the truth each Sunday when we come to Mass and listen to Jesus speaking to us in the gospel story. We need to listen and pay attention and reflect on the truth and not allow ourselves to be distracted and stay conveniently ignorant. Jesus told Pilate: *"Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."* Are we listening to what Jesus is teaching us; are we paying attention; do we belong to the truth?

Jesus taught us the great truth to love one another as He has loved us, and also to love our enemies. To do this we must see the face of Christ in every person we meet each day. It's not an easy task. We can look around us, even in this church with our fellow parishioners, and recognize how difficult this can be sometimes. It's a lot harder when we step out into the everyday world. It is one of the hardest truths to follow. But that is what our King tells us to do. Listen to His voice and look for His face and you will belong to the truth and to the Kingdom.

Deacon Joe Hulway