

Sunday 20th November 2022

Christ the King

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Colossians 1:11-20

Luke 23:33-43

It's that time of the year again when we think about Christ as king. This Sunday is known as Jesus Christ king of the universe, Jesus Christ as lord over all of creation, and also the Feast day of Christ the King - which is of course, to the people gathered in the church of Christ the King, their patronal festival.

This is the last day also of the liturgical year and it celebrates Christ's kingship and sovereign rule over all the earth.

This Kingship is explained as The kingdom of God is close at hand, which as next week is the start of Advent also means the arrival, or the coming of somebody.

When we acknowledge our faith, it is always with Jesus as our leader and teacher, who remains as a perfect example to us all, and to use the power of that faith in his name, in service to him and through him. as he taught and told us to.

The history of the world has always been a struggle for power and even today we see that need for constant power and control of all people and things - in politics, in religions, in business - also the media and even in all personal relationships.

Yet the feast day of Christ the King however seems to point to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, remember the last supper of breaking of the bread and drinking of wine, he told them do this in memory of me. He was showing the use of his power then, knowing he was going to be put to death on a cross, he wanted this feast day to be remembered.

The cross does not belong to him and him alone, but it is the legacy -the inheritance -the promise to each one of us that follows him, not to put an end to our human suffering but to show mankind how to suffer.

I find that a funny statement, but then when you think you can do "life " without him many of us stumble and fall. It takes us some time to realise and understand what he was trying to teach us and show us. The world today is still suffering by the sheer fact of human frailties in every shape and form they come in as power, domination, oppression, moral weaknesses, and a liability to yield to temptations.

Yet through it all he still remains Jesus Christ, still suffering at seeing the things that are going on in the world he created for us, but still ever present. He was mocked, he was taunted, tempted, flogged and eventually put to death, by this- he was making peace by the blood on his cross.

It is our faith that is assured by this act, it confirms to us that he is Lord, that Christ our king has that power that truly supercedes any earthly power.

So could this be the reason we end our church year with a feast?

This feast is always before Advent, it brings us into a new liturgical year, a new journey of faith is about to begin, and it starts with his birth – “oh come oh come Emmanuel” we sing - the meaning of – “God is with us”.

So today as we celebrate 37 years of team ministry with Christ the King and St Johns, let us think about what a journey we have all been on. We often talk about ourselves as being a church family, a family not quite so different from our own families. We have seen babies born, we have lost loved ones, we have rejoiced together, and we have cried together. We have seen people come and go and many vicars also. We have always managed to adjust to change, as each new vicar brought something different, but also the familiar embedded in our Sunday morning eucharist feast.

The feast day was established by the Pope to reassert the sovereignty of Christ and his power over all forms of government and to remind Christians of the loyalty they owe to Christ, who by his sacrificial death on the cross had made them adopted as the Children of God.

The feast day was originally celebrated on the last day of October, which is Halloween and the day before All Saints Day. In 1969 Pope Paul VI moved the feast to the last Sunday before Advent to highlight the importance of this day, as I said earlier the last day of our liturgical year.

The word King was used when Jesus stood before the Governor and he was asked "Are you the King of the Jews?" and Jesus replied "You have said so." In fact King is used a lot of times in the Bible, King of Kings, his Kingdom, Kingship, the wise men went in search of a King, The King of Nations and so on, perhaps you can even think of some yourselves.

The message of Christ the King is that he is in charge of our lives and that we must give him the sovereign power over our bodies, our hearts, our thoughts, and our will.

It is also a reminder of the fact Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world, for if it was my servants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the jews, but as it is my kingdom is not from here", which you can find and read in John's gospel 18 verse 36.

This day of Christ the King kind of ends the year rather nicely with a special feast and encourages us to look forwards, which next week sees us all doing just that in the events leading up to his birth and the anticipation and preparation of the second coming of Christ our King.

So I wish you all a very blessed feast day and a happy start to your new but continual journey of faith as we go forwards together, ordinary people from different back grounds yet united through our love of Christ our King.

Amen.

Denise Smith