

“Meet the King”

Sunday 22 November 2009

Lectionary Readings for the last Ordinary Sunday of the Year

Jeremiah 23: 1 – 6

Psalm 93

Revelation 1: 4(b) – 8

John 18: 33 3- 37

Church of the Ascension, Hilton

Nic Denny-Dimitriou

Placed in the front of the church: A jug of water, a bowl and a towel

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**Welcome & introduction to the service:**

Today is the last Sunday in the Season of Pentecost. The themes of our Scripture Readings today take us directly to the image of God – more specifically, of Jesus Christ – as King.

We celebrate a Feast Day traditionally referred to as “Christ the King”, as we acknowledge Him as Lord and look forward to His coming again in glory. We want once again to acknowledge Christ as the authority in our lives.

We come not only to praise him, but also to confess to God that in our daily words and actions we don’t always acknowledge His Kingship and Lordship over our lives. BUT we come also to re-state our trust and faith in a God, a Lord, and a King, who is always loving and compassionate.

**Prayer:**

Thank you, loving God, for giving us a King unlike any other; for rescuing us from all our false ideas of importance, power, glory and majesty. For in Jesus your Son, you break the power of evil and make all things new. May all in heaven and earth never cease to praise you; through Christ the King of all time and all places. AMEN.

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Christ the King Sunday – a brief sermon

Very rich imagery of God and of Jesus Christ as King, in our Readings today (elaborate, picking out major points)

Last week (7.00am service only) – I had fun considering the term “Judge”:

Positive and negative imagery of human Judges – considering what may be appropriate imagery to put onto God – considering a few aspects of the biblical imagery and language used for God as Judge (elaborate briefly)

Today I want to do the same thing, in a shorter time, with the idea of King. This is the last Sunday of the Church Year - known as “Christ the King Sunday” or “The Reign of Christ”. Next Sunday we begin a New Year, in Advent. We will light candles each Sunday, and get ready to celebrate Christmas, the coming of Jesus – the same Jesus whom we call the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I want you to think about what a King is like, what a King does, how a King is treated – and how a King treats other people. If you were a King, what are some of the things you would do? And how would you do them?

Jesus was a king, but he said his followers would not fight for him with weapons of war. And commanded them not to. This bowl and towel are a symbol of the kind of King Jesus was. Jesus was a king, but he knelt in front of his followers and washed their feet. Jesus was a king, yet one without palace, servants and fine horses, and sometimes he had no place of his own in which to sleep at night.

Jesus was a king, but he was born in a stable. Jesus was a king, but he died on a cross, which is how common criminals were cruelly executed.

Jesus is a king – not like the kings of this world. As King, he calls people to obey him, and to follow in his path; less “because they have to or else”; but more because he lives by truth, and by love, and these things are right and are the things that will allow us to live forever, for everything else will pass away.

Andy came across an interesting piece this week, which I’m going to read to you. Its starting point is that the title “King” may be more of a human term put onto God, because of our inadequate language to describe God. Also, like many of the writers of the Bible, we constantly use human references and examples (like King, Ruler etc.) to refer to God, but which may need to be thought through again.

Even the word “king” is problematic – we’re not familiar with kings any more; its a style of usually autocratic leadership that we’ve moved away from (though some elected presidents and other types of national leaders in the world today still act like autocratic kings of old); and even if you’re not deeply cynical, there are and always will be problems with any type of leader and political system.

This piece questions what TYPE of King Jesus is: [In your Sunday Leaflet, - please follow with me as I read it]

Read from leaflet

KING?

King is your word not mine;
 Friend I am, and not very choosy,
 pagans and prostitutes,
 publicans and sinners,
 grace is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
 Servant I am, no one beneath me,
 feet washer and waiter,
 serving the least,
 love is my kingdom

King is your word, not mine;
 Physician I am, all free of charge,
 touching the leper,
 expelling the demons,
 health is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
 A seer I am, seeing God’s word
 in mustard seed and yeast,
 wildflower and ravens,
 truth is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
 Tradesman I am, honing my craft,
 familiar with wood,
 hammer and nails,
 grace is my kingdom.

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Concluding Prayer to Sermon:

(Adapted from words by Richard J. Fairchild, November 2003.)

Dear Lord God
We thank you for Jesus the King of Love
The one who rules with truth
The one who shows mercy
The one who opens the gates of heaven so that all may enter in.
Help us to love as he loves
To serve as he serves
We ask this in his name. Amen.

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**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**Preface used before continuing with APB (First Eucharistic Prayer)**

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The Lord be with you – etc.

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It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,  
for you are the One who was, and is, and is to come,  
and you reign over all from beginning to end.

You created the earth and its inhabitants,  
and chose gifted men and women to lead your people,  
exalting those who rule with justice and humility.

In faithfulness to your promises,  
you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world  
to testify to the truth and shepherd your people.  
Though he was accused of treason before Pilate  
and executed by his own nation,  
he was the first born from the dead,  
raised by your power  
to free us from sin and make us your holy people.  
You gave him glory and dominion forever,  
and he rules over all  
with an authority that comes, not from this world,  
but from you, our God and our Rock.

[Continue with APB Communion Liturgy]

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BLESSING & DISMISSAL:

Go forth to serve the Lord in the strength, love,
and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And now to Him who sits upon the throne,
to the One true God,
be praise and glory, forever and ever;
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain in you always. AMEN

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**Notes end**