

Pastoral Message: November 21, 2021

We celebrate the feast of Christ the King. The Jesus we get before Pilate today...would that usually be the way we view a king? Certainly historically this has not been the case. Jesus though, on this Feast of Christ the King, comes before us in the power of service and love as the suffering servant. If you look at the gospel, the tables get turned and it is Pilate on trial in this dialogue with Jesus. Jesus makes clear that his call is for a different type of Kingdom which ultimately is the reign of God. If we look at Jesus, preaching, miracles, and his whole life was to enter peoples' lives manifesting the reign of God that desires to bring healing and wholeness.

More recent studies have emphasized what is known as the cosmic Christ. We can think of our faith within an understanding that scientists give us: evolution. 14.6 billion years ago the big bang was the beginning of this process. This was, in a sense, as the reading from Revelation states, the alpha which means beginning point. If we would reflect on this, then the first incarnation or revelation of God's love is the earth itself. If we sit on a mountain or by a running stream this is revealing God's love to us. In a sense, creation itself is our first Bible, and that's why our scriptures are filled with images of the earth. If we had this understanding, how differently we would treat our earth and thereby live in more sustainable ways. The Second Incarnation is Jesus Christ, and in today's gospel, through his death and resurrection, he points the way forward for all of creation. This is really what the book of Revelation, which is ultimately a long poem, is intended to do, to stretch our imagination and to lead us to deep reservoirs of hope in the resurrection. The book emphasizes a new heaven and a new earth. This image is a place where there would be no war, no hunger, and humanity would live in the fullness of God's love. Every time we say in the Lord's Prayer, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done," we are praying for this. We should realize though, because of Jesus, that reign of God or kingdom of God, even though we have not reached its fullness, we can live and move and work within it; that Jesus was the first to open this up and, in a sense, we can already have a taste of heaven or the new heaven and earth that, next week when we begin advent, reminds us—this is our ultimate hope. Paleontologist and Theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, emphasizing the Glory of Christ in the book of Revelation, puts it this way:

Glorious Lord Jesus power as implacable as the world, and as warm as life; you whose forehead is of the whiteness of snow, whose eyes are on fire, and whose feet are brighter than molten gold; you whose hands imprison the stars, you who are the first and the last, and the living and the dead, and the risen again; you who gather into your exuberant unity every beauty, every affinity, every energy, every mode of existence; it is you to whom my being cries out with a desire as vast as the universe. In truth you are my Lord and my God.