



**Sunday 25 November 2018 – Christ the King**  
**Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey**  
**Readings: New Testament Revelation 1: 4b-8, Gospel St John 18:33-37**  
**Focusing on mission action**  
**Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard**

We're much more accustomed to hearing Jesus speak to us from the pages of the Gospels, as events are happening. In John's Gospel we heard the conversation between Jesus and Pontius Pilate. Jesus explains that although he establishes his kingdom in this world it is not of this world, for his kingdom reveals the truth but the truth is something that Pilate cannot grasp.

The Book of Revelation also speaks the words of Jesus, as revealed to another John. The Revelation, however, is different to any other book of the Bible in that it's not primarily revealing the present but projects forward to the future. That's why I've chosen to focus on this reading to use it as a sounding board for our individual thoughts, so that we might discover the direction God wants for our church next year and beyond.

We were told in the first sentence of the reading that John is writing to the seven churches in Asia Minor - modern day Turkey. He's sharing with them the comments Christ has revealed to him about their mission action or perhaps lack of it. Let's discover what there is about those churches which we would not want ours to replicate or, if we have fallen into similar habits, to recognise that fact and change direction.

We begin by visiting the Church in the wealthy city of Ephesus. Initially, Christ praises the Christians for working hard to set up the Church but it seems their enthusiasm has waned. He challenges them to find again their love for their faith, so that they may share it lovingly with others. How enthusiastic are we feeling about our church? Full of beans or needing a tonic?

Next, we visit the Church in Smyrna which is facing imminent persecution. That's the last thing we want at St Andrew's! Standing up for our faith can be hard, however, if people see that there is relevance in what we believe they are more likely to join us rather than ignore us. How might we make ourselves even more relevant in this parish?

It's now the turn of the churches in Pergamum and Thyatira to come under the spotlight. They are commended for their faithfulness, love, service and patience. A welcoming bunch ... just like us? All good! But ... there's always a but to spoil things, isn't there? Pergamum and Thyatira are also accused of idolatry. They were denying Christ's truth by continuing to follow the pagan practices of former years because it was familiar - their way. Fresh perspectives and new faces challenge old

ideas but if they do not deny Christ then they reveal his truth. How much do we really welcome fresh initiatives in this church?

Sardis next comes in for criticism. Effectively Christ tells them they're dead from the neck up. If Sardis doesn't wake up to what discipleship and stewardship really mean it won't survive. What kind of disciples and stewards are we?

The church in Philadelphia is told it has very little persuasive power in its community but it has kept God's word. Do we sometimes feel that no matter what we do, Christ's light does not seem to radiate much beyond the walls of the Church? If so, take heart, God is with us. How might we reassure ourselves of this in 2019?

Last, but by no means least let's visit Laodicea. Christ says he's ready to spit them out of his mouth because their faith and worship is tepid. How he wishes they were either hot or cold. To understand that comment it's necessary to know a bit of geography and geology. Laodicea was in a fortunate location: crystal, cold streams on one side and hot, therapeutic springs on the other. On a roasting hot day what could be more refreshing and reviving than a cold dip? Conversely, on a cold day when chilled to the marrow, a hot bath is comforting and healing. What type of church are we? Are we refreshing, reviving, comforting and healing or tepid and in need of therapy ourselves?

I wonder, are you inspired by this sermon or just plain irritated by it? Either way good! Keep being inspired or irritated. Read it again online or take one of these copies home with you. Write down what inspires or irritates you. Come the New Year, let's share our ideas to get the best of everything. Christ our King desires that we emulate his example. To reveal the truth of his kingdom in our life and times, we first need to face the truth about ourselves.

Christ's loving commitment to us never waivers, his incarnate presence, which we will celebrate at Christmas is testament to that truth. May we, during Advent seek again Christ's truth to be revealed to us and in us, so that we might truly discern what God desires us to achieve at this church in 2019 and beyond. The Post-Communion prayer asks God to stir up the wills of his people, so that we may bring forth good works. Are we ready to be stirred?