



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Sunday, 21 November 2021 – Christ the King
Readings: Revelation of John 1:4-8, St John 18: 33-37
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

What is truth?

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus this question. How frequently do we think that we have heard the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? We, ourselves, may try and shy away from conveying a clear message anxious that the truth may hurt another, however, massaged messages seldom serve anyone. There may be times when we consider that we have heard is a version of the truth proffered by someone seeking to put themselves in a better light or, by innuendo, to denigrate another individual's character. In this regard, social media, great asset though it is, is also a great liability. By its very instant nature the virtue of discernment can be missing with people leaping to a superficial judgement distorting the truth fuelling cancel culture.

A rock and a hard place

So, what is truth? Pilate ponders this whilst doubtless feeling caught between a rock and a hard place. If he acts with honesty and integrity releasing Jesus, the religious leaders out of spite, will whip up the crowd claiming that Jesus has violated the laws of the land. Fearing insurrection, in appeasement, Pilate acts sacrificing truth personified in Jesus Christ. How though does this relate to Christ as King? The reading from Revelations answers both aspects.

Three ways of being God

John's revelation, begins as though its readers are being greeted personally by God the Holy Trinity. The Father who was, and is and is to come; Jesus Christ his Son and, the seven spirits. What? And there was me thinking that there was only one Holy Spirit, so who are these seven? Isaiah's prophesy of the Messiah makes sense of this indicating that 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety and to proclaim the good news.' Ah! So, one Spirit with seven virtues, which were bestowed on Jesus. Now we get it!

Three ways of God personified

Back to Revelations, we learn three further things about Jesus:

1. He is a faithful witness of the truth; in other words, he speaks from first-hand experience;

2. He is the first born from the dead; for, by his resurrection he was the first to rise from death;
3. He is ruler of the kings of earth: this is the ultimate vindication over evil. We'll recall that in the wilderness at the start of his ministry, Jesus was tempted by the devil to bow down and worship him: his reward being the kingdoms of the earth. Jesus refused to compromise with evil and, in his crucifixion and resurrection, by his purity he drew all people to himself becoming the King over all.

Three ways of this relating to us

All well and good but how then does this affect us today? Revelations promises us three things:

1. God loves us so that we may be freed from sin by His Son's shed blood. It is important to note that 'He loves us', in the present tense, therefore, while we live, we can continue to seek his forgiveness for our sins. And,
2. Freed from sin, we are made into a separate godly kingdom, unlike the kingdoms of this world that seek their own ends. And,
3. We are made priests. Umm? You might say, surely only the ordained are priests. To grasp the meaning of this we need to remember that the old Jewish protocol for the priest to enter the Holy of Holies, was to approach God on behalf of the people. At the point of Jesus' death, however, the temple curtain was torn in two abolishing the barrier between God and his people. God demonstrated that he is fully accessible and available for all to approach him. There is no barrier for we who believe: therefore, we become a royal priesthood in God's Kingdom.

Truth, the final arbiter

The final nugget of information in this passage tells us that Christ will return. When he does, for the evil this will be the day of reckoning. For the righteous, it's a promise to gather all into his heavenly kingdom. The extract emphasises this concluding, 'So it is to be. Amen!' In other words, 'This is the truth'. Or, as Jesus said to Pilate directly, 'For this I was born, and for this I came to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

What is truth for us?

May the Holy Spirit grant us his sevenfold virtues of discernment, to listen and live our faith in spirit and in truth.

Amen.