

2021 Christ the King Dan7:13-14; Rev 1:5-8; Jn 18:33-37

1. Have you ever attended a coronation? Yes? Hands up if you have attended a coronation of a king or a queen. Only one? Alright. What about a phone-in talk show? Probably all of us. **Today the Gospel invites us to participate in that one coronation/talk show that has never been surpassed.** God sends the invitation. Since we won't have time to field all our comments coming in, I will interrupt the host to insert some of them. We can't stretch this analogy too far, but **let's allow Pilate to be our host.**

2. Pilate to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus: "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"

Press pause: In the Liturgy we are not bystanders, pew-fillers but real time participants. Let's enter into the dialogue.

Pilate to you, as you call in: Are you a Christian, a follower of the King of the Jews?

You: Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?

Pilate: What difference does that make to you? Am I a Jew? Am I a Christian? Your own siblings, your fellow seminarians, your fellow monks, have handed you over to me. What have you done?

You: It makes all the difference, really. Did you see something different in me in what I said or did that convinced you I was a

Christian or did someone phone in my actions or words to you? Look! We are Christians! People do not understand us. We do things differently because we have been anointed by the Holy Spirit. God will vindicate us in the end.

Pilate: So you are a Christian then? A King?

Jesus intervenes: My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews.

Another Caller: Listen, you are not going to believe this. Please don't cut me off before I finish. I would like to say this to you, Pilate, and to your listeners: Yes, I am a king. **I am a descendant of this man, Jesus Christ, but not of the flesh.** Yes, I share his great dignity of royalty even though I am a fragile human being. Not as a right but because he gave it to me as a free gift. Do you believe this? Don't hang up on me, please! This coronation and talk show is **also** about me – my dignity and greatness as a son/daughter of this King. **He was born for me and destined my birth for the same purpose – to witness to the truth.**

Pilate: Well! **Your claim is both ridiculous and astounding.** Just like this miserable lacerated man before me. Either you are insane or you are a good liar. **I have never met any Christians like you.** Most of those I know abuse children, trample on consciences and are responsible for the Residential School crisis.

3. At this point we stop, you switch off the radio and we have time to reflect. **A coronation? Yes!** Even if we are left with a

little sinking feeling when abuse and residential schools are mentioned. Pilate could not accept Jesus' greatness clothed as he was in the misery of his passion and suffering. **Yet Jesus did not hesitate to proclaim his immense dignity as a King, in spite of his pain and agony.** Our dignity as the royal sons and daughters of the King of Kings does not diminish because of our sins and failures. **It is only eclipsed if we allow it to be eclipsed in each other.**

4. The first caller came close to the root of the Christian's dignity but wanted to wait for God's vindication at the end of time to prove it. He or she knew his dignity but did not know how to witness to it.

5. The second caller actually understood Pilate's question: "So you are a king?" because she understood the gift of her own greatness in her littleness. Her answer shook Pilate's self-assurance: "Your claim is both ridiculous and astounding." **Ridiculous and astounding.** This feast day is no doubt about Christ the King and his Kingdom. But he became king in our flesh to make us kings with him! Our flesh is ridiculous, inadequate, but his gift of royalty is astounding. This feast teaches us to carry in ourselves both a magnanimity and a humility as we exercise our kingship. A magnanimity that is aware of the very great dignity we carry and a humility that is ready to serve despite ourselves! This is the realistic nature of our Kingship in Christ before his second coming. **The**

combination of these two virtues of the heart is the essence of leadership and puts many things in place.

6. For instance, so many of our current efforts to renew and reform the Church focus on the professional expertise of psychiatrists and psychologists. These assist our humility, our brokenness. But magnanimity can only mature from imitating the example of Christ our King. **It means that we must place the spirituality of the Gospels high above psychological growth,** even if the latter is necessary. It means that we learn to evaluate people first from their potential for greatness and then from an assessment of their vulnerabilities and shortcomings. **The Gospel is not about our brokenness but about our greatness in God's sight!**

7. "He who is magnanimous and humble *magnanimously* assesses his talents and judges himself worthy of great things, which he undertakes with confidence; at the same time, he *humbly* perceives his status as a creature and understands that his capacities and virtues, even those acquired by his personal efforts are ultimately gifts of God."¹ It is Christ the King who proposes this path to each of us. In this Eucharist, Our King invites us to his coronation where his magnanimity and humility are joined to our own flesh.

¹ Alexandre Havard, *Created for Greatness: the Power of Magnanimity* (New York: Scepter, 2014), 20.