



A Reflection for Christ the King Readings - Revelation 1. 4-8 & John 18.33-37

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?' After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him.'

This incredible painting from the year 1335 located in the Vatican Picture Gallery links the end of the Medieval era to that of the threshold of the Renaissance in Christian art. Jesus and Pilate are enclosed in a space that is covered. To the left of the painting stands a Jewish leader with a number of Roman soldiers. The soldiers are holding weapons of power with their vividly painted red shields. They appear to be together, united and indeed menacing. The Jewish leader has a raised hand as he seeks to be part of what is going on.

Pilate is raised up and sitting on what appears to be a throne as he looks at an angle directly into the eyes of Jesus. Pilate seems to be nervous as he twists a golden tassel with his right thumb and forefinger. Pilate is the one who is expressing uncertainty, nervousness, even fear regarding the situation that he finds himself in.

Is this the moment that Pilate has asked Jesus, 'What is truth?'

Lorenzetti in his painting has emphasised the empty, silent space between Jesus and Pilate highlighted by the corner of the room being depicted just off centre of the composition. Jesus stands in the middle and looks at ease with his arms crossed at the wrists because they are tied. With his head in a thoughtful, tilted position he stares in silence back at Pilate. The picture captures the moment of silence, the moment of truth, between Jesus and Pilate. A moment of wonder as to what will Pilate do. Will he change his behaviour and look to that of a Servant King?

We celebrate Christ the King who led a very different life. The same Jesus invites us, whether we are a monarch in earthly terms or not, to consider how we live out our lives. Do we need to make behavioural changes in order to have an attitude of service. Jesus invites us in our lives to live out his teachings and to set as our example the life of the Servant king.

Thank you for reading and keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Please join with The Priory as we also stay connected virtually.
Night Prayer weeknights from 9.00pm.
Please go to the Cartmel Priory Facebook page.*

Image - 'Christ before Pilate' by Pietro Lorenzetti