

**Sermon for Proper 29 (Christ the King)
Year B**

[RCL] Psalm 132:1-13,(14-19); 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

For most of us, living as we do in a republic, imbued with democratic values, the very concept of monarchy seems remote and eccentric. True, some of us enjoy watching or reading about the latest headlines about the House of Windsor. But in an election year, even the beautiful Duchess of Cambridge or her husband don't long distract us from the real world of Clinton and Sanders, Trump and Carson.

So when the collect for today has us pray that the restoration of all things is all about a King of kings and a Lord of lords, we are cast into unfamiliar territory. Perhaps we reach out to older translations that have Jesus say that his kingdom is NOT of this world, which, of course he didn't say.

Nor do the lessons in either track appointed for today help us with our sense of alienation, a disjunction between our life experience and the world of scripture, as the texts talk of a Davidic king, or the "Ancient of Days" enthroned in clouds of splendor. Of course it is true that our spiritual ancestors could only think and write within cultural norms, but nor may we devise a theology of Jesus suggesting that he is to submit to public approval every four years.

Perhaps two suggestions may be of help. Today's lesson from Revelation points to two things. The first is that the baptized are incorporated into a "royal priesthood". This means that, in Jesus, we have become those who stand as a body or company. We are given the task of mediating between God and humanity and creation. We are God's agents of reconciliation. At home, work, school, play, in social interactions - even on Facebook - we echo God's plea, "Come to me all you who work and are burdened and I will give you rest." We speak and act not merely as a priesthood, but as a priesthood invested with royal authority, a royal status epitomized in servanthood.

In the same passage from Revelation we read:

"Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Every Sunday when we proclaim the faith of the Church when we say together in the Nicene Creed, "He will come again in Glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end." For just as now, the royal priesthood works for justice and mercy, tells of God's forgiveness and unfathomable love, and lifts up the Cross as the sign and symbol of Christ's redeeming work. We look forward in hope to the end times. When, in a manner we may only express in poetry, symbolism and ritual, the world will be put right, Eden restored and sorrowing and crying will be no more.

When Pilate asks Jesus if he is the King of the Jews, Jesus seems to prevaricate. "My kingdom is not from this world." Even though he is a descendent of the hero king David, Jesus claims no affinity with the structures associated with nationalism, with monarchy or republics. "My kingdom is not from here." His kingdom is about truth, ultimate truth, truth that originates with God.

On this Christ the King Sunday we commit ourselves to Jesus, “the way, the truth and the life”, the king who is a servant. Who comes, teaches, heals, reconciles, dies and rises again, who lives through us and who will return. Nowhere is this more evident as in Eucharist when we bring the world to God through Jesus and offer “ourselves, our souls and bodies” as we “dwell in him and he in us”. So the royal priesthood is nourished and strengthened to be Christ in the street and supermarket, Christ beyond the red door of our parish church and the coming of the true King is announced and heralded from the rooftops.

Written by Anthony Clavier

Anthony is the Vicar of St. Thomas' Church, Glen Carbon, with St. Bartholomew's, Granite City, IL and Co-Editor of The Anglican Digest.

Published by the Office of Mission Communications of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.