

CHIRST THE KING (B)

Kings and queens today, especially in the Western World, are by and large, figure heads devoid of any real power. But way back in history, they were powerful and mostly ruled through fear. However, they couldn't have done so without willing aides.

But are secular leaders today that much different. They too have their lackeys. To maintain power they are often beholden to financiers who can lean on them for favours. You'll have heard of the proverb: 'when money talks the truth is silent'. The Kingdom of God, on the other hand is transparent and based on undiluted truth. There are no hidden agendas or backroom deals. Jesus said: 'those who live by the truth come out into the light.' They are not beholden to anyone except God and their conscience.

The Gospel reminds us that the Kingdom of God is either within us or it's not there at all. The tug-o-war between truth and falsehood goes on in the minds, hearts and consciences of each person. The decisions we make, our motivation for action and the way we form our consciences will be the litmus test as to whether we're subjects of God's Kingdom or not.

At times facing the truth about ourselves can be difficult. But the Kingdom of God is not about camouflaging sin or shifting the blame. The truth can sometimes be hard to take but in squaring up to it and doing something about it my conscience will be set at ease.

The scene before Pilate provides a classic encounter between the Kingdoms of truth and falsehood, light and darkness. Jesus emphasised to Pilate that His Kingdom is not of this world. The whole trial of Jesus was a charade. He was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. False witnesses were brought forward during his trial. Barabbas, a murderer, was set loose. In washing his

hands Pilate buried the truth. He condemned an innocent man even though he told the crowd he could find no reason for the death sentence. In so doing he went against his better judgement in order to avoid trouble with Caesar and the crowd who were clamouring for his crucifixion. When faced with this situation a man's life didn't count for much.

The still small voice of conscience urges us to do this and shun that. But there are other misleading voices, trying to influence us as well. Which one do we follow? Is it the voice of Pilate who buries the truth or the voice of Jesus who says the same words to me as he said to Pilate: "All who are on the side of Truth listen to my voice".

Last week we spoke about God's judgement. St Paul tells us: 'all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ'. We need have no fear of the final verdict if we try and live out the Truth in love. The Kingdom will be ours.