



Solemnity of Christ the King – King of the Universe
Thirty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 25th November 2018

In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: Young People
Keynote: The Kingship of Christ — Lord of all creation

Prophet Daniel 7: 13-14

Daniel proclaims his vision of how a series of cruel rulers will be replaced by the coming of the messianic king, he says: *'I gazed into the visions of the night. I saw coming on the clouds of heaven, one like the son of man... on him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship... which shall never pass away'*. This 'son of man' – the one in human form, is in contrast to the 'beasts' of earlier visions, for this new vision is of the one who will establish the kingdom and the rule of God... *'and all people, nations and languages become his servants... His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which will never pass away'*.

Responsorial Psalm 92 (93): 1-2, 5

A royal song celebrating the universal kingship of God

Book of Revelation 1: 5-8

An even more difficult language, style and imagery, is presented to us by the apocalyptic texts found in the Book of Revelation. This time, it is Jesus Christ who is the subject: *'Christ is the faithful witness, the First-born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood.'* There is an echo here of that first reading, *'It is he who is coming on the clouds and everyone will see him...'* And the words of Christ echo down the ages too: *'I am the Alpha and the Omega'* says the Lord God, *'who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'*.

Gospel according to John 18: 33-37

The evangelist John casts this conversation between the Roman Governor Pontius Pilot, and the arrested man Jesus, almost as if it were a private discussion. We are able to eavesdrop, to reflect on the meaning and significance of this meeting. The discussion seems to focus on authority, power, and the nature of kingship. One detects, the tension between the mighty, but actually impotent Governor of Judea, and the accused Jesus yet apparently powerless man summoned before him. But who has the greater power? The truth of the matter is that Pilot, the Roman Governor would have no authority unless given him from above by the Emperor Augustus, whereas Jesus says, *'My kingdom is not of this world,'* it is something quite of a different order. *'So you are a king then?'* asks Pilot. *'Yes,'* replies Jesus, *'I am a king. I was born for this... to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice'*. In the end each of us might ask ourselves, whose side are we on? Will we stand with the innocent, the accused, the weak, or alongside the strong and powerful who abuse their man-given authority? Indeed, Jesus is right when he says: *'My kingdom is not of this world... I was born for this... to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice'*.

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Note: † Sunday 2nd December 2018

First Sunday of Advent (Sunday Reading Cycle C starts)